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NOTES,
ILLUSTRATIVE AND EXPLANATORY,
ON THE
HOLY GOSPELS:

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO
TOWNSEND'S CHRONOLOGICAL NEW TESTAMENT.

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VOLUME II.

FROM THE ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES TO THE
FEAST OF TABERNACLES,
ABOUT SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE CRUCIFIXION.

DESIGNED TO ACCOMPANY LONGKING'S QUESTIONS, VOL. II.

Cincinnati:

PUBLISHED BY SWORMSTEDT & POE,
For the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the Book Concern
Corner of Main and Eighth-streets.

R. P. Thompson, Printer.

1854.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1840,
by T. Mason & G. Lane, in the Clerk's Office of the District
Court of the Southern District of New-York.

PREFACE

TO

NOTES ON THE GOSPELS.

THE following "NOTES ON THE GOSPELS" were prepared at the earnest solicitation of several superintendents and teachers in our Sabbath schools, who had long and deeply felt the want of some simple and cheap work, explanatory and illustrative of the Holy Scriptures. That the book is all it should be, the compiler dare not hope; yet he is encouraged to believe that it will be a help—he trusts an *efficient* one—in enabling the teacher to impart that knowledge "which is able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," and that it will not be less useful in assisting the pupil to gain a clear understanding of the "oracles of God."

The work makes but slight pretensions to originality, it being rather the design of the writer to ascertain the true import of Scripture from a careful examination of the expositions of wiser and better men than himself than to obtrude on the reader his own unassisted thoughts. In many instances, the source whence information is derived is expressly acknowledged; but as this could not always be done, a list of the authors more frequently used in the preparation of these pages is here given:—Clarke's, Benson's, and Cobbin's Commentaries; Wesley's, Campbell's, and Bloomfield's Notes on the New Testament; Barnes's and Ripley's Notes on the Gospels; the Expositions of Doddridge, Watson, and Hol-

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den; Macknight's and Townsend's Harmonies; the Pictorial and Cottage Bibles; Horne's Introduction; Calmet's, Watson's, and Covell's Dictionaries of the Bible; Jahn's Biblical Archæology, Jennings's Jewish Antiquities, and Allen's Modern Judaism; Bush's Illustrations, and Harris's Natural History, of the Bible.

Particular attention has been paid to *illustration*, where *correct* illustration could be found. The author has not, however, seized on every thing which bore the appearance of illustration, but has only used such as he had reason to believe did truly apply to Jewish customs or modes of thought.

The compiler commits the work to the favourable notice of his fellow-labourers, with the prayer that the great Head of the church may bless it to the improvement of many.

J. L.

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NOTES ON THE GOSPELS.

LESSON I.

Ordination of the Apostles—Sermon on the Mount.

LUKE vi. 12-19.

AND it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, he called *unto him* his dis-

NOTES ON LUKE vi. 12-19.

Verse 12. *He went out into a mountain*] This mountain is supposed to be that now known as the mount of Beatitudes, for a description of which see the note on Matt. v. 1. *To pray*] Jesus seems to have chosen this place for his devotions on account of its solitude, as he could here pour out his desires unto God without interruption. If the question be asked, Why should *Jesus* pray? we answer, Because he was "very man" as well as "very God;" and as prayer is not merely the language of dependance, but also of faith and hope, and hence is pleasing to God, we may reasonably suppose the *man* Christ Jesus would frequently use it. By "prayer" we are here to understand not prayer alone, but also holy meditation and devout thoughtfulness. Mr. Wesley renders the passage, he "continued all night in the prayer of God," and says, "the phrase is singular and emphatical, to imply an extraordinary and sublime devotion."

Verse 13. *When it was day*] Having spent the night

ciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

14 Simon (whom he also named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

in prayer that a blessing might rest on those he was about to designate as the future promulgators of his gospel. *He called unto him his disciples, and chose twelve*] This number was probably chosen as answering to the twelve patriarchs or tribes. *Whom he called apostles*] The word apostle means *one sent*—a messenger. These were Christ's messengers to announce to the world the glad tidings of salvation.

He chose his apostles thus early that they might be with him, not only to attend on his public ministry, but to witness his astonishing miracles, and enjoy the benefit of his private instructions, that they might thereby be better fitted for the great work in which they were to be employed.

Verse 14. *Peter*] We are not to suppose that Peter is first mentioned on account of any superiority over the other apostles, (for he possessed none,) but simply because he was the first chosen. See Matt. x. 2. *James and John*] These were the sons of Zebedee and Salome, and belonged to Capernaum. They were called "the sons of thunder" by our Saviour, probably from the fervour, eloquence, and power with which they declared the truths of the gospel. *Philip* was a native of Bethsaida, as were also Andrew and Peter. John i. 44. *Bartholomew* seems to be the same with Nathanael, (John i. 45,) for such of the evangelists as mention Bartholomew omit the name of Nathanael; while John, who mentions Nathanael several times, never uses the name of Bartholomew.

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes.

16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain; and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

Verses 15, 16. *Matthew*—Called Levi, Luke v. 27, was of Capernaum, having been a collector of taxes in that place. He is the author of the gospel which bears his name. *Thomas* was probably a Galilean, as well as the other apostles, excepting Judas, but the place of his birth is unknown. *James, the son of Alpheus*, or Cleopas, ("for they are but different ways of spelling the same name,") is sometimes called the Less, (Mark xv. 40,) to distinguish him from the other James. *Simon Zelotes*, or the Zealous, is called the Canaanite, Matt. x. 4. *Judas*, or Jude, [called *Thaddeus* or *Lebbeus*, Matt. x. 3,] is the writer of the epistle bearing his name. The three last-named persons were relatives of our Saviour, probably cousins, their mother being called, John xix. 25, the sister of the virgin Mary. *Judas Iscariot* is supposed to have derived his name from Kerioth, a small town in the tribe of Judah. Josh. xv. 25. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have each given the names of the apostles. As these apostles were persons honoured with authority to direct the religious faith of mankind, it was of much importance to the church and the world that the account of their appointment should be preserved.

Verse 17. *Tyre and Sidon*] See note on Lesson X.
Came to hear him, and to be healed] The anxiety of

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

MATTHEW v. 1-5.

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.

the people to hear Christ's instructions shows that they believed him "to be a teacher sent from God;" his miracles were designed to confirm them in this faith.

Verse 18. *They that were vexed*] The word "vex" means, with us, to provoke or irritate by trifling provocations: it here means to afflict, to torment. *Unclean spirits*] That is, evil spirits or demons. *He healed them*] Healed the possessed, which shows that devils are subject to him.

Verse 19. *There went virtue out of him, and healed them*] Virtue here means power. Jesus willed that power should proceed from him to heal all who believingly touched him.

MATTHEW v. 1-5.

There is some difference of opinion among critics whether the sermon here noticed and that mentioned Luke vi. 17-49, are the same discourse, or whether they were spoken on different occasions. The reasons for thinking them to be the same are, 1st. That the close of both is alike; 2d. That the substance of both is the same; 3d. That, *after* the discourse was delivered, both affirm that Jesus went to Capernaum, and healed the centurion's servant. Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10.

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The points of difference are, 1st. That Matthew says the sermon was delivered on a *mountain*; Luke, in a *plain*: one says, Jesus *sat*, the other, that he *stood*: Luke omits some things which Matthew inserts, and gives some which Matthew omits. It may be that Jesus came to the base of the mountain to heal the sick, &c., and then, finding that they pressed on him, returned to the mountain for their more convenient instruction.

Verse 1. *He went up into a mountain*] A few miles north of mount Tabor, on the road from Tiberias to Nazareth, is a hill called the mount of Beatitudes, from a tradition that the sermon on the mount was there delivered. Rae Wilson says, that it is from two to three hundred feet high, and that the view from the summit, which is an area of many acres, is both extensive and beautiful. There is, however, no positive evidence of the truth of the tradition. *And when he was set*] After the manner of the Jewish doctors, who, according to Maimonides, commonly sat when delivering their instructions, their disciples being seated on semicircular seats below and facing them. *His disciples came*] The word "disciple" means a learner; and includes not only the immediate followers of Christ, but also all those who attended on his instructions.

Verse 2. *He opened his mouth*] An expression used to indicate the commencement of a solemn and weighty discourse.

Verse 3. *Blessed*] That is, happy. *The poor in spirit*] Poverty of spirit, or humility, implies a deep sense of our unworthiness and natural imbecility in all things relative

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed *are* the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

to our salvation, and is the root of all true faith and trust in God. We cannot but observe here, that Christianity begins just where heathen morality ends ; leaving all pagan religion behind. *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven*] This poverty of spirit leads to the reception of that spiritual kingdom which is begun on earth and consummated in heaven.

Verse 4. *Blessed are they that mourn*] Those who mourn over their sins, desiring to be delivered from them. Contrition for sin is a gracious state of mind produced by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and is evidence of God's favour toward those thus exercised, and that he will assuredly comfort them with a sense of pardon, and peace in the Holy Ghost, as soon as they believe in Christ. The consolations of religion are also well calculated to support and sooth those who are in affliction of mind, body, or estate.

Verse 5. *Blessed are the meek*] Meekness implies the absence of all angry passions, and is a fruit of regenerating grace. It is patient under suffering, and ready to forgive injuries. The Holy Spirit, if fully received, will certainly produce this disposition in all who seek it. *They shall inherit the earth*] The original word here translated "earth" sometimes means the land of Judea. Here, however, it imports something more. The promise was given to Abraham and to his seed that they should "inherit" or possess the land of Canaan : they believed God's word, and waited patiently for its fulfilment. From this time, Canaan was invested with a typical character, and represented to the faith and

LESSON II.

Sermon on the Mount, continued.

MATT. v. 6-16.

BLESSED are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

hope of spiritually-minded Jews the great inheritance of heaven. To the meek, therefore, an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan is here promised. A beautiful contrast may be remarked in this passage:—the Jews came into possession of the land of Canaan through deeds of blood; but the Christian warfare is not carnal but spiritual; and patience, humility, gentleness, and charity are the arms by which we urge our way into the inheritance above.—*Watson.*

NOTES ON MATT. v. 6-16.

Verse 6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness*] Hunger and thirst are the keenest, most painful sensations of the body. None so imperiously demand relief as these. They are here expressive of strong desire, and aptly figure the earnest longing of the soul for the possession of the greatest spiritual good. Psa. xlii. 1, 2; lxiii. 1. *They shall be filled*] Satisfied, so as to desire nothing more. Still, unless we earnestly seek after the “fulness of God,” we shall not be “satisfied with the fatness of his house.” Psa. xxxvi. 8.

Verse 7. *Blessed are the merciful*] The tender-hearted, the compassionate, the forgiving. This idea embraces

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

the doing all the good we can to the bodies and souls of men. We are never more like God than when engaged in acts of mercy, springing from proper motives, for He has declared himself to be "merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity and sin." "There is," says Mr. Jay, "a blessedness attending this administration of mercy that can be conceived only by those who exercise it. The luxury of doing good surpasses every other personal enjoyment." *They shall obtain mercy*] If we withhold mercy from others, God will withhold his mercy from us: but though we may not plead our exercise of mercy to others as giving us any *claim* on so undeserved a blessing, yet we thereby remove out of the way that which would be an insuperable barrier to the exercise of God's mercy to us.

Verse 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart*] That is, those who are regenerated by the Spirit of God, whereby their affections, desires, and motives are made pure. At the time of conversion to God, there is implanted in the soul a principle of holiness, and if that principle be cherished, it will strengthen and grow, so that the believer may indeed become "pure in heart" by the destruction of all sinful passions, and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. The Pharisees made a great show of religion, but they were not pure in heart, for they were hypocrites. *They shall see God*] They shall possess or enjoy him in the manifestations of his favour while on earth, and still more perfectly in heaven. The apostle John says:—"Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we *shall* be: but we know that when he [Jesus] shall appear [in glory]

9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

we shall be like him, for we shall *see* him as he is." All men shall indeed see God as their Judge, but they all will not thus desire or possess him, for the wicked will *dread* him. Purity of heart is required of all: are *you* aiming at it?

Verse 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers*] Those who exert themselves to prevent quarrels, ill-feelings, &c., or to reconcile contending parties. In so doing, however, we must not *rashly* interfere with other people's business, but wisely and mildly use our influence to promote kind feelings. This declaration of our blessed Lord is sometimes perverted, being used as an argument to show that we are not to disturb the false peace of sinners or of corrupt churches by reproving them. We ought not, however, to be deterred from performing our duty by such considerations. Without doubt, Jesus Christ was the most perfect example of every virtue that ever lived; yet he says he "came not to send peace, but a sword;" that is, that although he taught the truth, and endeavoured to promote the real happiness of men, yet his doctrines and followers would be opposed, and in some cases the opposition would become so violent, that many would seek the destruction of their nearest relatives. See Matt. x. 21, 35. *They shall be called the children of God*] This was a common mode of speech among the Jews, and meant, they *shall be* the children of God, who is "the author of peace," (1 Cor. xiv. 33;) for as they try to promote peace they resemble him, and may so far be called his children. "All the true followers of Christ are lovers and promoters of peace; and those who are of the contrary disposition have no right to

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when *men* shall revile you, and per-

consider themselves a part of the family of God." Our Saviour does not here prohibit a proper defence of our character or property, if assailed, when we shall have made all suitable efforts to secure peace.

Verse 10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake*] To persecute here means to vex or oppress one on account of his religious belief. If, by a wrong course of conduct, we subject ourselves to punishment, this cannot be called persecution; for that supposes unjust and unprovoked opposition. The cause of persecution is generally the enmity which the un-renewed heart entertains to superior goodness, by comparison with which its own deformity is made more plain. Profane history makes mention of probably not less than three millions of persons suffering martyrdom for their attachment to the faith of Christ during the first three centuries of the Christian era. Mr. Benson and others suppose that since that period a far greater number have perished by persecutions emanating from the Church of Rome. *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven*] That is, those who *patiently endure* such sufferings (for there is no *merit* in being *persecuted*) shall in the present life partake of the rich consolations of God's Spirit, and supreme felicity will be their abundant reward in glory. "Among the crowns in heaven the martyr's crown will probably be the most glorious."

Verse 11. *Revile you*] To revile is to reproach, to slander. *Falsely*] Without any cause. *For my sake*] Because you are my followers—because you belong to me. If we wish to share in the blessing pronounced in

secute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

the next verse, we must be careful not to give any reasonable cause of offence; but let our lives be so good, that if people say bad things of us, they shall evidently be false.

Verse 12. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad*] Strange requirement, in the estimation of human wisdom! Yet, through the power of divine grace supporting and comforting the soul, we may rejoice: for it is well known that many of the early Christians were filled with holy rapture at the prospect of sealing the profession of their faith in Christ with their blood. And the very means which were designed by the idolatrous heathen or the bigoted fanatic to subvert the cause of truth, proved the instruments of its wider dissemination. "The blood of the martyrs" has ever proved serviceable to the church. *Great is your reward in heaven*] A patient and cheerful suffering for Christ in this life will certainly be rewarded with blessedness in the life to come. This, however, will not be a reward of *debt*, but of *grace*: for God gives the grace to enable us to suffer, and then crowns that grace with glory. *So persecuted they the prophets*] The prophets were holy men of God, sent by Him to instruct the people in the true religion. For a notice of their sufferings see the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. Our Saviour seems here to say, that as these prophets had formerly been persecuted, but were now happy in paradise, so his disciples in all ages should partake of the same felicity, if faithful to the end.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Verse 13. *Ye are the salt of the earth*] Common salt, formerly called the muriate of soda, is the chloride of the metal sodium, which is the base of soda, and is more abundant in nature than any other salt. It possesses antiseptic and resolvent qualities. The particular property here referred to is, its power of preventing or arresting the progress of putrefaction. In the midst of that which is corrupt it preserves its own purity, and communicates to other substances its own incorruptibility. Thus the character and the public influence of true Christians are each forcibly represented. *The earth* here signifies not the land of Judea merely, but the whole world. *But if the salt have lost his savour, &c.*] And so have become insipid, and almost tasteless. *Wherewith shall it be salted*] Mr. Watson says: "This expression appears not to have been rightly understood by those who think it imports that the savour of grace can never be regained. It was rather the intention of our Lord to impress his disciples with the sin and danger of being *useless* to mankind, through the neglect of personal and influential piety. 'Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it—the earth—be salted?' or purified." *It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be trodden under foot*] Townsend, quoting from Schoettgen, says, that an inferior kind of salt was collected from the Asphaltic lake, [or Dead sea,] with which the sacrifices were salted; but which, on being exposed to the sun and air, soon lost its flavour, and was then sprinkled over the

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

pavement of the temple. The savourless salt represents those who, though they retain the profession of religion, and *seem* to be Christians, yet, having lost the vital influences of piety, their love to God is greatly weakened, and, in consequence, they no longer exert a good influence upon others. And as the savourless salt is rejected from the nobler purposes for which it was designed, so will Christ reject the disciple who throws from him or lets slip the grace which he had received, unless, indeed, he repent and return to God.

Verse 14. *Ye are the light of the world*] The sun is the great source of light in the natural world. The Lord Jesus is, in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural: hence he is called "the sun of righteousness," the "light of the world," &c. Religious teachers are here compared to light, because they make plain to the understandings of men the things belonging to the kingdom of God, as light in the natural world makes plain to the bodily sense the things around us. The light they thus dispense is, however, a borrowed one, being derived from Him who is emphatically the "light of the world." *A city set on a hill cannot be hid*] The church of Christ is metaphorically called "the city of God;" and as a city, especially when set on a hill, is a conspicuous object, so ought the church of Christ to be in every nation where it is planted. The meaning of the passage is, You had need be wise and holy, for your conduct can no more be hid than can a city that is built on a hill. Many of the cities of Palestine were placed on the summits or sides of mountains, and could be seen from far. The town of Saphet, supposed to be

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick : and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

the ancient Bethulia, stands on one of the highest hills in Galilee, and is a conspicuous object for many miles around. It is plainly visible from the mount of Beatitudes, and if this sermon were really delivered there, it is not improbable that the situation of Saphet suggested the figure used by our Saviour, and that he directed the attention of his disciples to it when he made the allusion.

Verse 15. *Neither do men light a candle, &c.*] The words translated "candle" and "candlestick" should have been rendered *lamp* and *lampstand*, candles not being used in Judea. Mr. Watson says, "The houses were illuminated all night long by lamps placed upon a large stand fixed in the ground, which lamps were fed with olive oil." May not this fitly illustrate the advantage and excellence of domestic piety? Surely, the head of every family ought to "give light to all that are in the house." The word rendered "bushel" signifies simply a measure, the Jews having no measure answering to our bushel: many think a measure holding about a peck is intended. The meaning of this illustration is, that as men do not light a lamp and then try to conceal its beams, but put it where it will best diffuse light, so the disciples were to use the grace given them for the benefit of others, as is clearly shown in the next verse. We have here three degrees of comparison:—the light of the sun, of the church, and of the family.

Verse 16. *Let your light so shine, &c.*] That is, let your conduct in every respect be so holy, wise, and good,

LESSON III.

Sermon on the Mount, continued: Design of Christ's coming—Explanation of the Sixth Commandment.

MATT. v. 17-26.

THINK not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

as to instruct and benefit all around you, and lead them likewise to love and serve God. We are not to do these things to be *seen of men*, for that would be encouraging pride and other bad passions; but we are to do them to please God, and so glorify him; for every good work, proceeding from obedience to God's law, *does* honour him, as it is a proof of our respect to him, and an acknowledgment of his sovereignty. John xv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 12. The Pharisees made a great *show* of piety and benevolence, but they did it to gratify themselves chiefly, and therefore our Lord condemned them. To *glorify* sometimes means simply to offer praise, (Psa. l. 23,) but here it has a more extended signification.

NOTES ON MATT. v. 17-26.

Verse 17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, &c.*] The original word rendered "to destroy" also means *to loose, to annul* or make void by freeing from. The term "law" signifies a rule of action; a precept or command coming from superior authority, and to which obedience is due. This word is used in two leading senses in the New Testament—one

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

embracing the whole Mosaic institution, or ceremonial law, the other signifying the moral law. The moral law is contained in the decalogue or ten commandments, recorded Exod. xx. 1-17, and specifies the duty we owe to God and to each other; the ritual or ceremonial law is that which regulated the observances of the Jewish religion. Our Saviour seems here to refer particularly to the moral law, which he "fulfilled" or *perfected* by explaining its spiritual nature, enforcing its obligations, and declaring its perpetuity. There is also a sense in which Christ afterward fulfilled the ceremonial law, when, by becoming a sacrifice for sin, he abolished it: for this law was but as an index pointing to Jesus Christ, and after his death was no longer needed, its types being all fulfilled in him. The term "prophets" means the prophetic writings; particularly, says Watson, the preceptive parts. Some think our Lord made the declaration contained in the text lest the Jews should suppose him to be a setter forth of new laws.

Verse 18. *Verily*] Truly, certainly: a strong affirmation, and denoting the great importance of what follows. *Till heaven and earth pass*] While the world lasts. How unchanging are God's requirements, and his faithfulness! *One jot or tittle of the law shall not fail*] Jot is the name of the Hebrew letter answering to our J, (י,) the smallest character in that alphabet. "One tittle"—that is, the smallest particle. This word is supposed to refer to the small dots or points which distinguish some of the Hebrew letters from others very like them in appear-

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pha-

ance. The phrase imports that the smallest requirement of the [moral] law shall not be abrogated or superseded; for, being the foundation of our duty to God and to each other, this law is of perpetual obligation. *Till all be fulfilled*] Till all things be done or accomplished. 'Till the law, through the grace of the gospel, has effected the subjection of men to the dominion of God.

Verse 19. *Whosoever shall break*] Violate or transgress. *One of these least commandments*] That is, one of the least, &c. The scribes and Pharisees made many frivolous distinctions between what they termed great and small commandments. None of these commands, however, are of small import; they are all binding—equally binding. *Shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven*] A phrase which imports that such person shall have no portion in the heavenly kingdom. Although by “the deeds of the law,” merely, no one can be justified before God, yet it is equally certain that those who hold that faith in Christ, unaccompanied by obedience, is sufficient to salvation, will come as far short of the crown of righteousness. It is the happy union of faith and loving obedience that brings the soul to heaven.

Verse 20. *Except your righteousness*] Your obedience to God's requirements. *Exceed*] Surpass, be more thorough. *The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees*] Who, it is said, taught that only the outward act was commanded or forbidden, and explained the law

risees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment :

accordingly. Well might they be called "whited sepulchres!" Yet notwithstanding these short-sighted views, "they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." The righteousness of the Christian is to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, 1st. In its universality ; *they* made light of some of God's commandments, the Christian heartily and reverently receives all. 2d. In its extent ; he strives to be *inwardly* as well as outwardly holy. The Spirit of Christ dwells in his heart, purifies his affections, and prompts to love and good works.

Verse 21. *Ye have heard*] From the scribes and others reciting the law. Jesus now proceeds to give a more spiritual and authoritative interpretation of the moral law than had been generally given. He shows that it was designed to take cognizance, not only of the outward act, but of the secret thought. *By them of old time*] This should probably be *to* "them of old time," as the margin reads. It seems to refer to the giving of the law at mount Sinai. *Thou shalt not kill*] See Exod. xx. 13. The Jews understood this merely to forbid the *act* of murder ; Jesus Christ shows that it meant more than this ; that it extended to the *intentions* and *feelings*, as well as to the external act. A man who is desirous of injuring another, and is only prevented by want of opportunity, or by fear of the consequences, is criminal in the sight of God. *Shall be in danger of the judgment*] Shall be held guilty, and punished for his crime. The law of Moses directed that judges should

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*,

be appointed in every city, (Deut. xvi. 18,) and that murder be punished with death. Lev. xxiv. 21. The "judgment" is affirmed by most commentators to have been a court composed of twenty-three persons, and to have had power to put to death by strangling or beheading. Mr. Barnes, following Josephus, thinks the court was composed of seven persons.

Verse 22. *But I say unto you*] Jesus Christ speaks here with the utmost authority, as the interpreter of his own law; which he had a right to do, being God as well as man. John i. 1. *Whosoever is angry*] Anger is not always evil; for we read that God is "angry with the wicked;" (Psa. vii. 11;) and again, "Be ye angry and sin not." Eph. iv. 26. In this sense anger is "the warm repulsion of whatever is injurious and unworthy, though without malice to the offender," and is therefore not wrong. *With his brother*] With any one; for all men are brethren, having one common Father, and should therefore be treated with kindness. *Without a cause*] Without sufficient reason. But what is a sufficient reason? Nothing but that which dishonours God, or injures man. All kinds of sin are injurious, and may therefore be "hated with a perfect hatred." *Shall be in danger of the judgment*] This may refer to an earthly court when anger is carried to such excess as to lead to a violation of the peace: when it is merely an emotion of the mind, however, human courts cannot take notice of it, and in such cases "the judgment" must refer to the bar of almighty God. *Raca*] A Syriac word expressive of great contempt. It signifies *vain, empty*;

shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

and is equivalent to *senseless, stupid, shallow-brains*. We here see how wrong it is to reproach or speak contemptuously of each other; our Saviour shows it to be a transgression of the sixth commandment. Children should be very careful not to allow themselves to call bad names. *The council*] This means the sanhedrim, or great court of the Jews. The Jewish writers pride themselves on the antiquity of this court, and make great efforts to prove that it existed from the time Moses appointed the seventy elders in the wilderness, (Num. xi. 16,) until the subjection of the nation by the Romans, about A. D. 70. The probability is, however, that it came into existence about the time of the Maccabees, or two hundred years before Christ. It was composed of seventy or seventy-two members, and comprised three descriptions of persons, viz., 1st. The *chief priests*, who were partly such as had been high-priests, and partly the chiefs or heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided; 2d. The *elders*, perhaps the princes of tribes or heads of families; and, 3d. The *scribes*, or men learned in the law. It does not appear that all the elders and scribes were members of this tribunal; most probably only such of them as were elected to the office. Josephus says their sittings were held in a house near the temple; in some cases, however, they assembled in the residence of the high-priest, as was the fact in the trial of our Saviour. The authority of this court was very extensive. They might put to death by stoning, which was accounted more dreadful than strangling or beheading. In very extreme cases, we infer they might inflict death by

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,

burning. *Thou fool*] This expression comes from a word which signifies an *apostate, a rebel against God*; and is used to denote one guilty of great crimes, particularly an infidel. See Psa. xiv. 1. It is a stronger word than *raca*, and in this case implies a higher degree of anger and malignity. *Shall be in danger of hell-fire*] Shall be deserving of the fire of Hinnom, (*Ghi hinom.*) This was a narrow valley skirting Jerusalem on the south, and running eastward from the valley of Gihon, till it intersected the valley of Jehoshaphat. According to Jerome it was originally a beautiful spot, finely shaded by trees; and on account of its pleasantness was chosen as the worshipping place of Moloch, that horrid idol of the Ammonites to whom the Israelites, in the times of idolatry, sacrificed their children by burning. Jer. vii. 31. After the return from the Babylonish captivity, this valley was made the receptacle for the refuse and offals of the city, and constant fires kept there to consume the filth. It is also supposed that in some cases criminals were here put to death by burning. The place thus became an apt emblem of the pollution and torment of hell. Isa. lxvi. 24.

Before closing it should be remarked that the epithets here so severely censured are elsewhere used by Christ or his apostles. Christ says the Pharisees were "*fools and blind*," (Matt. xxiii. 17;) and to his apostles, "*O fools, and slow of heart*," &c., (Luke xxiv. 25;) and St. James calls the man who discards good works as necessary to salvation, "*vain man*," James ii. 20. Hence we infer that these expressions are not cen-

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

surable when justly applied, and with right motives ; but only when they proceed from rash or intemperate anger, ill-will, or rancour of spirit. The intention of our Lord was, obviously, to inculcate self-command ; the complete subjection of the passion of anger to reason and love.

Verse 23. *Therefore*] Inasmuch as improper anger is thus sinful and dangerous. *If thou bring thy gift*] However costly and free. "The original implies a free-will offering, which adds great strength to the sentence." A very important part of divine worship among the Jews consisted in the offering of sacrifices. *To the altar*] The altar of burnt-offering, on which sacrifices were



presented. It stood in the open air, in the court before the temple. Josephus describes this altar as being, in

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him ; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

his time, built of rough stones, fifteen cubits high, forty long, and forty wide. *Hath aught against thee*] Any just cause of complaint. The Pharisees were intent only on the *external* act, regardless of the state of mind.

Verse 24. *Leave there thy gift*] In the care of the proper minister. *First be reconciled to thy brother*] Acknowledge thy fault, both to him and God, and endeavour to make restitution ; or, if the offence be imaginary, seek an explanation, and so settle the difference. This direction shows us how necessary a spirit of love and goodwill is to an acceptable worshipping of God. Philo, a distinguished Jewish writer, explaining the law of the trespass-offering, says, " When a man had injured his brother, and, repenting, voluntarily acknowledged it, he was first to make restitution, and then come to the temple, presenting his sacrifice and asking pardon."

Verses 25, 26. *Agree with thine adversary quickly*] The word rendered "adversary" is a law term, and signifies a complainant. *Lest he deliver thee to the judge*] By the Roman law a complainant was justified in dragging the offender immediately before the judge, without process of summons, as with us ; when, (unless satisfaction were given on the way, in which case it did not reach the magistrate,) a severe fine was generally imposed, and, in default of immediate payment, the accused was cast into prison until payment was made.

Farthing] This was a Roman coin, worth about half a

LESSON IV.

Sermon on the Mount, continued: Laws of adultery, of divorce, of profane swearing, of retaliation.

MATTHEW v. 27-48.

YE have heard that it was said by them of old time,
Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

cent of our money. This passage teaches us that we ought *now*—at once—to seek reconciliation with whomsoever we have offended, especially with God, lest his justice should suddenly break forth on us, and we find there was “none to deliver us.”

NOTES ON MATT. v. 27-48.

Verses 27, 28. *Ye have heard, Thou shalt not commit adultery*] Our blessed Lord here explains the seventh commandment, and enforces obedience to it. The law of God is holy, and forbids wrong *thoughts* as well as wrong *actions*; and we ought to be glad that such is the case, because it is much easier for us to overcome wicked desires when they first present themselves, than it is to resist them after they have gained strength. *Whosoever looketh*] Wantonly, with evil desire; such a desire as gains the full consent of the will, and would certainly terminate in action did not impediments arise. We here see the necessity of carefully guarding against all circumstances which may lead to sin. *Has committed adultery already in his heart*]

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one

Our Lord gives this exposition in opposition to the views of the Pharisees, who attached no criminality except to the act of adultery. In commenting on this subject Dr. Bloomfield remarks, that there are many passages scattered up and down in the philosophers who lived *after* the promulgation of the gospel, which maintain a higher tone of morals than had before prevailed ; and which can be ascribed to nothing but the silent effect of the gospel even on those who refused to receive it.

Verses 29, 30. *If thy right eye—thy right hand—offend thee*] That is, *cause* thee to offend. To *offend* means, with us, to displease ; but such is not the import of the Scripture phrase : *that* signifies to *ensnare*, as in a trap or net—to *cause to stumble* or *fall*, that is, into sin—to *entice to evil*. The eye does this when it administers to impure desires, and the hand when it is used in performing wicked actions. *Pluck it out—cut it off*] This seems to be a figure taken from surgery, when a mortified member must be removed or amputated to prevent the spread of the disorder. To pluck out the eye, and cut off the hand, is equivalent to “crucify the flesh,” (Gal. v. 24,) and “mortify your members,” (Col. iii. 5,) which are necessary to the salvation of the soul. *For it is profitable for thee, &c.*] It is better for thee, thou wilt be the gainer, as thou mayest thus secure to thyself everlasting felicity. Our Saviour’s meaning is, that sin is to be resisted at all hazards, and that no sacrifice is to be considered too great when it is required

of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement :

for the good of the soul. *Than thy body be cast into hell*] If sin continue to be indulged in here, the ruin of the soul is inevitable : and no small portion of the future torment of the wicked will probably be the existence—perhaps the fearfully increased existence—of the passions which have led to their misery, yet without the most remote possibility of their gratification. What a dreadful situation ! Well may it be likened to the burnings of an unquenchable fire ! It is evident from this passage that the grave will not always retain possession of the body, for the body (as well as the soul) of the wicked will be cast into hell.

Verses 31, 32. *Whosoever shall put away his wife*] This was allowed in certain cases by the law of Moses, (Deut. xxiv. 1, 2,) but we cannot conceive that it ever contemplated so great license as was afterward given to it by the Jews. For although the doctors of one of their great schools contended that the “uncleanness” which justified divorce meant unfaithfulness, yet the disciples of the more popular school interpreted it to mean *any cause of dislike*, however trivial. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says, “I this day put away my wife, who had borne me three children, not being pleased with her manners.” The husband claimed to be sole judge in this matter, and acted according to his own caprice, utterly regardless of the wrong done to the wife. No reason need be assigned for the act. *Let him give her a writing of divorcement*] That is, a certificate that she had been his wife, but that he had dissolved the marriage.

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Both parties were then considered free to marry other persons. Our Saviour, however, declares all divorces to be opposed to the original design of marriage, and to be allowable only in cases of adultery. Among the Arabians, whose customs better illustrate the Old Testament scriptures than do those of any other people, divorce is allowed on even more easy terms than among the ancient Jews, for with them it is but necessary for a man to say to his wife three times, "Thou art divorced," and she is so. Burckhardt assures us that he had seen Arabs not more than forty-five years of age, who were known to have had fifty wives: yet the Arabs have rarely more than one wife at a time. It will be at once seen how far superior was the law of Moses to the Arab custom, for by requiring that a *written* certificate of divorce should be given, he afforded an opportunity for the subsiding of any momentary excitement, and so did much to prevent the separation of ties which had been designed to continue in full obligation through life. A proper respect to the obligations of the marriage contract is the foundation of domestic happiness and of public morals. *Unjustly* divorcing a wife is here declared to be a violation of the seventh commandment; and if the divorced marries another during the life time of such husband, she is declared an adulteress, and he whom she marries is also guilty, because the first contract is still binding. The Saviour names but one thing which can free from this solemn

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

obligation, and no man, or set of men, has any right to grant divorces on other grounds.

Verse 33. *Thou shalt not forswear thyself*] To forswear means, strictly, to take an oath without an intention of fulfilling it: it also implies the taking a false oath, which we term perjury. This crime is a violation of the ninth commandment. *But shalt perform—thine oaths*] “An oath among Christians is a solemn appeal for the truth of our assertions, and the sincerity of our promises, to the one only God, the judge of the whole earth, who is everywhere present, and sees, hears, and knows whatever is said, done, and thought in every part of the world,” imprecating his vengeance if we act contrary to the tenor of such promise. Dr. Clarke says, the Jews maintained that a man might swear with his lips, and annul the oath the same moment in his heart. This is a tenet held by many Romanists, too, in their intercourse with “heretics,” as Protestants are frequently termed. Such opinions are destructive of all morals.

Verse 34. *Swear not at all*] Jesus Christ is not to be understood as prohibiting judicial oaths, (that is, oaths solemnly put in the name of Deity, for purposes of justice, by persons lawfully appointed to administer the same,) for none of the oaths he forbids were by the name of God, as all judicial oaths were. Lev. xix. 12. Besides, we have his own example, (Matt. xxvi. 63,) and that of his immediate followers, (Heb. vi. 16,) countenancing such oaths. That which Christ condemns is

35 Nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of the great King :

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

the practice of swearing in common conversation, or in a light, unnecessary manner, whereby the sanctity of oaths became lessened, and confidence in the veracity of our fellow men seriously impaired. *Neither by heaven, for it is God's throne*] His habitation ; the place where his presence is most gloriously manifested. The Jews had imbibed the notion that no oaths were binding unless uttered in the *name* of Jehovah. Our Saviour teaches, on the contrary, that all oaths, in fact, imply an appeal to God. See Matt. xxiii. 22.

Verse 35. *Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool*] A footstool is a small bench for the foot to rest on when sitting. The term is applied to the earth to denote how lowly and humble a thing it is when compared to God. But though it be under his feet, yet it is also under his eye and care. "The earth is the Lord's;" so that in swearing by it you swear by its Owner. *Jerusalem, city of the great King*] That is, God, whose temple was there, and whose presence was there symbolically represented, Jerusalem being a type of heaven. Rev. xxi. 2, 10. "The ancient Arabs," says Schulz, "called God simply THE KING."

Verse 36. *Neither by thy head*] This was a frequent oath among the Orientals, and Mr. Jowett says is still "one of the commonest oaths made use of in Palestine and Syria." To swear by the head was equivalent to the ancient oath of swearing by the life : yet life is the gift and property of God, and no man has a right to

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

pledge what is not his own. The phrase "upon my word," and similar expressions, should never be used, as they are a violation of the spirit of this law.

Verse 37. *Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay*] That is, Let your word, your assent or denial, be simple and candid. The repetition of yea and nay signifies the fulfilment of the promise or denial made by the first use of the terms: as though Christ had said,—Promise and perform. See James v. 12. *More than these*] Stronger declarations than these—profane oaths. *Cometh of evil*] Are evil. They have their origin in depravity of heart, and their tendency is to increase that depravity. Men addicted to profane swearing have seldom the confidence of community; for those who habitually violate one command cannot be confided in as respects others. We quote the following observations from Barnes' Notes: "It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. The most worthless and vile, the refuse of mankind, swear with as much tact and skill as the most finished and" perfect "in the school; and he that wishes to degrade himself to the very lowest level of pollution and shame should learn to be a common swearer. Profaneness is disgusting to the refined, abominable to the good, insulting to those with whom we associate, degrading to the mind, needless and injurious in society, and awful in the sight of God."

Verse 38. *An eye for an eye, &c.*] Our Saviour here seeks to correct the evils which had arisen from a false interpretation of a judicial direction relating to the redressing of injuries. See Exod. xxi. 24. That which was intended to be a rule of judgment to the magistrate had

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.

been perverted by the Jews to justify private revenge. The Greeks, Romans, and many other nations, as well as the Jews, had a law that an offender should suffer a punishment similar to the injury he had inflicted. Horne, however, says "it appears to have been rarely, if ever, strictly put in execution, but the offending party was to give the injured person satisfaction ; an equivalent was accepted, the *value* of an eye, a tooth, &c., for the eye or tooth itself." The learned Selden is of the same opinion.

Verses 39, 40. *But I say unto you, Resist not evil*] To resist usually signifies to oppose, to offer force to force ; but it here means to *retaliate*, or return evil for evil, which we are by no means to do. By "evil" we are to understand *insult, violence, or aggression*, not moral evil, or sin. *Smite, &c.*] This corresponds to our *rap* or *slap*, which was regarded as an affront of the worst sort, and was severely punished by the Jewish and Roman laws. Mr. Watson, and some others, suppose these admonitions to have been proverbial expressions among the Jews, denoting a patient, forgiving temper. Indeed, that these commands are not to be taken literally, as enjoining the particular actions here specified, but the *disposition of forgiveness*, is apparent, not only from its being usual in the east to put the action for the disposition, but from the manner in which the precepts are introduced. *If a man sue thee, and take away thy coat*] The "coat," among the lower classes in the east, is a kind of loose linen or cotton shirt, extending from the neck to a little below the knees, and open in

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

front almost as low as the waist: it is made with or without sleeves, according to the wish or ability of the owner. Among the higher classes its place is supplied by a tunic or vest, richly embroidered, reaching down to the ankles. *Let him have thy cloak also*] Or mantle, as the word is rendered in the Old Testament. See 1 Sam. xv. 27, and 2 Kings ii. 8. This, according to Shaw, is an oblong piece of cloth or stuff, about eighteen feet long, and five or six wide. It was generally tied across the shoulders, and its folds confined around the waist by a girdle. The law of Moses required that on the four corners of this vesture should be worn fringes or tufts, with a binding of blue riband. Num. xv. 38, 39; Deut. xxii. 12. When engaged in active employment this robe was either laid entirely aside, in which case the person was said to be "naked," (Mark xiv. 51, 52,) or the ends tucked in at the girdle, which illustrates the apostle's exhortation, "Gird up the loins of your mind," 1 Pet. i. 13. By the Mosaic law a creditor was prohibited retaining the raiment of a poor debtor when given in pledge, but was obliged to return it every even, that he might sleep in it. Exod. xxii. 27; Deut. xxiv. 12. The import of our Saviour's injunction is, that we had better submit to as unjust a procedure as the violent retaining of such pledge would be, than resist such process in a vindictive spirit.

Verse 41. *Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain*] The word translated "shall compel" comes from the Persian, and signifies a king's courier, or messenger sent with royal despatches. In order that such commands might be carried quickly,

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

these persons had authority to press horses and carriages, wherever found, into the public service, to go such distance as was needed. If necessary, they could also compel the personal attendance of the owner of such horse or carriage. It was to this custom that Christ referred. Rather, says he, than resist a public officer requiring your attendance and aid for a certain distance, go with him peaceably twice as far. The Romans adopted this practice from the Persians, and it is still retained by the Turks.

It may here be asked, Does Jesus Christ forbid his followers having recourse to the law to shield themselves from aggression or insult, or to redress their grievances? Certainly not, as we may learn from his own conduct, (John xviii. 22, 23,) and from that of Paul, (Acts xxii. 25-29.) "Besides, it is a principle laid down in the New Testament that magistracy is of God, and that the magistrate 'bears not the sword in vain.' The doctrine inculcated is, that we must not be eager to resort to legal process on comparatively trifling occasions, and that even in more serious cases, the Christian ought to be clear in his own mind that he is free from a spirit of revenge, and is acting with a serious regard to the duty he owes to himself and to the public."

Verse 42. *Give to him that asketh*] The gospel not only requires that we do no evil, but that we embrace all proper opportunities of doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men. We ought, however, to act with discretion in our charities, because indiscriminate generosity would probably do more evil than good, by encouraging the dissolute in wickedness, or the idle in

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

indolence. If a man be sick, and unable to work, relieve his necessity; if hungry, but healthy, satisfy his hunger and furnish him with some employment, even though it be but little. Never refuse a little relief, unless there are very strong reasons for suspecting the suppliant to be an impostor. Better, far better, that you should be imposed on, than that you should turn away a really needy person. Still, let not generosity carry you to such lengths as to injure yourself or family. 1 Tim. v. 8. Of this, however, there is not much danger, for men are generally—almost universally—*too selfish*. *From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away*] That is, lend to him. In most cases it is better to *lend* the amount necessary to the relief of an individual than to give it. From the parallel passage in Luke, (vi. 35,) it would appear we are to lend even when there is little or no prospect of repayment. In such case remember, (and let this silence all doubts,) that God charges himself with what you give [or lend] from love to him and to your neighbour: he is the poor man's surety. Prov. xix. 17. If a man who has the ability to relieve the distresses of a fellow creature refuses to do it, he violates the plain command of Christ, dishonours his profession, and must answer for it in the day of judgment.

Verse 43. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*] The latter clause is not contained in the law of God. Moses' law enjoined the Jews to love their neighbours, (Lev. xix. 18,) without defining the term. As they were commanded to destroy the idolatrous nations of Canaan, and prohibited forming social connections with

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

them, lest they should be corrupted, they supposed that by the term "neighbour" their own nation only was meant; and that all others were to be accounted as enemies, excepting such as became proselytes to the Jewish faith, whom they understood to be the "strangers dwelling among them." Lev. xix. 34. After the Babylonish captivity, the malevolence of the Jews to all mankind except their own nation was so remarkable that the heathen took notice of it. Tacitus, a Roman historian, says, "Their fidelity is inviolable, and their pity ready toward one another; but unto all others they bear an implacable hatred."

Verse 44. *Love your enemies, &c.*] An enemy is one who seeks to do us an injury. Herein we see the superiority of the Christian religion over all others: its chief characteristic is love,—not only to friends, but also to enemies: it returns good for evil, blessing for cursing. Although we are here instructed to bear good will toward our enemies, constantly manifesting a disposition to do them good, it does not therefore follow that we are to approve their conduct; for as we cannot approve of that which we know to be wrong, so we need not seek to excuse its guilt. We may condemn the *act*, or the disposition to do evil, but yet love the person. *Bless them that curse you*] The common meaning of "bless" is, to praise, to thank, or to bestow a benediction: it here signifies *to speak kindly to them*, without returning their revilings; and *well of them*, as far as we can see any thing commendable in them. *Despitefully use you*] This means either to distress by

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

unjust and grievous prosecutions in law, or to injure or insult in any other manner. Mark this; so far from returning evil for evil, we are to pray for our "persecutors." But for what are we to pray? 1st. That *we* may be preserved from ill-feeling toward them; 2d. That God would preserve us, and make our righteousness to appear; 3d. That those who thus wrong us may be brought to a better mind. For the meaning of "persecute," see the note on verse 10. When, however, the oppression becomes so severe as to endanger our safety or liberties, it is both our privilege and duty to seek the protection of the law:—only it must be done in a right spirit.

Verse 45. *That ye may be the children of your Father, &c.*] That is, that ye may prove yourselves to be his children by resembling him in disposition and benevolent feelings. All men are God's children in one sense, because he created them; all who believe in Christ, and receive the forgiveness of sins, become his children also by adoption; those who act like him are said to be his children, because they resemble him. God bestows the blessings of the present life indifferently on all, notwithstanding the constant provocations to a contrary course by the wickedness of many. This ought to be a powerful inducement to us to be "*imitators* of him, as dear children," that so we may show before all our relationship to him.

Verse 46. *If ye love them [only] which love you, what*

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

reward have ye] What ground of commendation is there in this? Such love is not disinterested, but selfish, seeking only its own gratification. *The publicans*] The publicans were tax gatherers. Judea was, at this time, a Roman province, and as such was subject to the payment of taxes for the support of that government. The publicans were the collectors of this tax; and as they bought their offices for a certain sum, they were frequently tempted to remunerate themselves largely, by demanding more than was their due. They were generally regarded with abhorrence, especially by the Jews, who looked upon such of their own nation as held this office as being little better than heathen.

Verse 47. *If ye salute your brethren only, &c.*] The salutation here alluded to expressed more than mere civility—it denoted hearty good will. The usual salutation to friends among the Arabs is, according to Niebuhr, *Salaam aleikum*, “Peace be to you,” at the same time placing the right hand on the heart: the answer is, “To you be peace.” Oriental custom forbids that foreigners, and persons of another religion, should be saluted in these words. The Mohammedans of Syria never salute Christians in the above manner, contenting themselves by saying, “Good day to you;” or, “Friend, how do you do?” Mr. Lane, in his recent work on Modern Egypt, has a similar remark. It seems that the Jews were equally punctilious in this respect, not saluting even one of their own nation, if he were a publican; while the publicans held themselves as far distant

LESSON V.

Sermon on the Mount, continued: Of Alms, Prayers, the Lord's Prayer.

MATT. vi. 1-10.

TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

from the heathen. Our Lord required his disciples to lay aside such moroseness, and express more extensive benevolence in their salutations. We learn from this that the good will of the Christian is to show itself in a careful observance of the forms of external civility and courtesy.

Verse 48. *Be ye therefore perfect*] The word "perfect" signifies entire, without defect, complete in moral excellence. In man, however, there is no *absolute* perfection, nor any degree of goodness which does not admit of increase. A comparison of this passage with the preceding matter will show that it is the divine perfection of love, evidenced in acts of benevolence, which we are here exhorted to imitate; and with this view Luke agrees in the parallel passage—"Be ye merciful," &c., Luke vi. 36. *As your Father in heaven is perfect*] That is, in the same *manner*; the likeness consists in the *nature* of the perfection, not in its degree. Mr. Wesley and some other commentators say that the original expresses a *promise*, rather than a *precept*; "Ye shall be perfect," &c.

NOTES ON MATT. vi. 1-10.

Verse 1. *Take heed that ye do not alms before men*] To "take heed" is the same as *mind that ye do not*,

2 Therefore, when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have

be careful to avoid so doing. From this caution we learn that there is much danger of our doing good actions from wrong motives. *Alms* are charities given to the poor. *To be seen of them*] To gain their good opinion as charitable persons. Christ does not mean that we must never give alms before others, for sometimes a person's necessities are so pressing as to require *immediate relief*, and if we delay, even but for a short time, such delay might prove fatal, and we be held answerable before God, to a certain extent, for such individual's death. Besides, if we might only give in a strictly private manner, we should lose many opportunities for exercising benevolence, and consequently miss much pure gratification. In addition to this, we all possess an influence, and we ought to exert that influence properly:—it is sometimes well to have *our* charities known, that *others* may be incited to liberality by our example. It is said of Dr. Wilson, of England, that one evening he handed a friend £50 (about two hundred and twenty-two dollars) for the relief of a sick and poor clergyman he had discovered at Bath, directing him to deliver it as from an unknown friend. The gentleman promised to deliver it early next morning. “You will oblige me, sir,” said the doctor, “by calling directly. Think of what importance a good night's rest may be to that poor man.” This was true charity. *Otherwise, &c.*] If our *only* or *chief* aim is to be seen of men, God will not reward our act. Remember this. Our Saviour does not here *command* his disciples to give alms, (that he had already done, chap. v. 42,) but he supposes they

glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

would, of course; we therefore infer it to be every one's duty, if possible.

Verse 2. *Therefore*] As ye can have no reward for alms done from wrong motives, *do not sound a trumpet, as the hypocrites do*] Some commentators suppose that the Pharisees, under pretence of calling the poor together to receive alms, did really have a trumpet or horn blown when they were about to bestow any thing; not so much that the necessitous might be the more readily collected, as that their own inordinate love of praise might be gratified. Others, however, are of opinion that this saying of Christ is merely a proverbial expression, implying that these hypocrites delighted in conferring alms in a public, ostentatious manner. The proverb is supposed to have originated in the custom of blowing a trumpet to proclaim the new moons, and to collect the people together on various public occasions. Mrs. Judson, giving some account of the first Burman convert, says, "A few days ago I was reading with him Christ's sermon on the mount. He was deeply impressed, and unusually solemn. 'These words,' said he, 'take hold on my very heart. How unlike our religion is this! When Burmans make offerings at the pagodas, they make a great noise with drums and musical instruments, that others may see how good they are.'"
Hypocrite comes from a word which signifies an *actor*, a *dissembler*; one who personates a character other than his own: hence in religion it means a man of *pretended* sanctity. *Synagogues*] Here, places of public resort, civil as well as religious. *They have their reward*] The praise of men, which is all they sought for, or will

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

ever receive. How much better is the honour which cometh from God, and which is as enduring as the other is fleeting!

Verse 3. *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*] A proverbial saying, importing such secrecy as to escape, if possible, the observation even of ourselves. The meaning is, Do it as secretly as is consistent with doing it at all, (for it must not be left undone,) and with doing it in the most effectual manner. When we take least notice of our good deeds, God takes most notice of them.

Verse 4. *Thy Father which seeth in secret*] By "Father" we are to understand God, whose presence being everywhere diffused, the most secret actions lie open before him. *Himself shall reward thee openly*] HIMSELF, not a mortal who has nothing to give but vain applause, shall reward thy good deeds. This often takes place in the present life, when a favouring providence does, as it were, *openly* mark out the conscientious and humble giver as a special object of blessing;—but the *final* rewards, in the presence of saints and angels, are in the highest sense intended. Our Lord does not propose a mercenary motive here. The alms are not to be given for the *sake* of the promised reward, but from a sense of duty, and the impulse of those kindly feelings toward each other which it is an essential branch of our religion to cultivate. In entire consistency with this, however, the promise of our Lord may be brought to encourage us in the cheerful performance of such duties.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are* : for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they

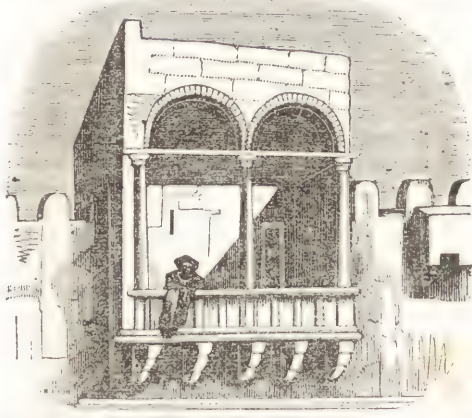
Verse 5. *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites*] Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, for such things as are agreeable to his will, in the name or through the mediation of Jesus Christ. *For they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets*] By synagogues we may understand either a place of worship, or any public resort, whether civil or religious. The usual posture during prayer among the Jews, at the time of Christ, seems to have been standing, except on occasions of penitence or mourning, when they kneeled, or prostrated themselves. Formerly, however, the more reverent mode of kneeling was practised. The appointed hours for public prayers were at the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices, that is, at the third and ninth hours of the day. Acts ii. 15 and iii. 1. If the appointed hour overtook a man before he got to the synagogue, he might pray where he was at the time. The practice of the hypocrites to whom our Saviour alludes was, to take care to be overtaken by the hour of prayer when in the street, or some public place, and, preferably, at the corners of the streets, or where two or more streets met, for the sake of greater publicity.—*Pict. Bible*, quoting *Lightfoot*. The same respectable authority says further, “ Things are still exactly the same in the same country, [among the Mohammedan population,] and in the other countries of Mohammedan Asia. This seems to be one of the many things the Mohammedans have borrowed from the Jews.” The Jerusalem Talmud has the following : “ I observed Rabbi Jannai standing and

may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,

praying in the street of Trippor, and repeating an additional prayer at each of the *four corners*." The *stated* daily prayers of the Jews consisted [and do still consist] of what is called the eighteen prayers or petitions supposed to have been composed by Ezra, and one since added by the Rabbi Gamaliel against heretics and apostates, in addition to numerous short prayers and blessings.

Verse 6. *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet*] The Helrew word here rendered "closet" is the same as that translated "summer parlour" in Judges iii. 23, 25, "loft," in 1 Kings xvii. 19. 23. and "little chamber,"



in 2 Kings iv. 10; and signifies a room usually built over the porch or passage leading from the street to the in-

and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

terior court. This "little chamber" was sometimes carried up higher than the main building, and frequently projected from the wall into the street, in a manner somewhat resembling the overhanging of a large bow window. When thus raised above the principal part of the building, it was entered by a door opening from the roof. The roofs of houses in the east are flat, with a balustrade around them to prevent persons falling off. Being thus removed from the more busy parts of the mansion, it was well suited for retirement and devotion, and was used for such purposes by the really devout. The term "closet" has become proverbial with us for any secret place of devotion. The kind of prayer enjoined is private prayer; not that Christ regarded public prayer as non-essential, (Matt. xviii. 20; Heb. x. 25,) but to guard his followers against the ostentation and pride of heart of the self-righteous Pharisees. *And when thou hast shut thy door*] Although secret prayer is to be performed in retirement, yet if the circumstances be such that we cannot avoid being noticed, we must not therefore neglect the duty, lest the omission be greater scandal than the observance of it.

Verse 7. *Use not vain repetitions*] The original term means prolix, useless speech,—either repeating the same thought over and over again, in the same words, or using different words to express the same idea. That *all* repetition in prayer is not objectionable is evident from the conduct of Christ himself, who prayed "thrice in

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

the same words." That which is forbidden is, "vain repetition," springing from an expectation of being heard for "much speaking." The heathen thought their gods were pleased with a variety of titles, and on that account were the more propitious to their worshippers; and therefore they stuffed the hymns to their gods with names and epithets.—*Young*. "Heathen" strictly means *strangers*, as opposed to the people of God; it is commonly translated *Gentile*. The idea that a prevailing merit was attached to much speaking in prayer has found a place in most false systems of religion. See 1 Kings xviii. 26. The Jews seem to have adopted the same opinion, probably from their idolatrous neighbours, so that it became a maxim with them, "He that multiplies prayer shall be heard." This is particularly the case in the Mohammedan creed. Witness the following: "Whoever says, *Subhan Allah* and *Bihamdihi* a hundred times in a day, his faults shall be silenced; whosoever says so morning and evening, no one will bring a better deed than his on the day of resurrection, except one who shall have *added* any thing thereto."

Verse 8. *Be not like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of*] This sentiment is sometimes used to show that prayer is unreasonable. Persons thus arguing ought to remember that we do not use prayer to *inform* Deity of our wants, or simply to move him to bestow; but rather, to express our sense of dependance on him; gratitude for past favours; and confidence in his ability and willingness still to succour us; so that, so far from God's knowledge being a reason why we should *not* pray to him, it is one of the reasons and

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

grounds of prayer. Besides, as a being of perfect wisdom, he cannot require the performance of an unreasonable act;—the fact of his enjoining prayer, therefore, proves it to be reasonable.

Verse 9. *After this manner pray ye*] After this model—in this way. This form is usually called our Lord's prayer, from its being taught us by Christ. *Our Father*] This short invocation teaches us that God is the Father of all mankind, he having given them existence; Mal. ii. 10: "Have we not all one father: hath not one God created us?" This expression further teaches us, that *all* men are brethren, God being their common Father. We ought therefore to cherish feelings of affection for all, as members of one great family. In a yet higher sense is he the Father of those who, through faith in Christ, have become his adopted children, so that they can, with holy confidence, say,—

"My Father, God, with an unwavering tongue."

Which art in heaven] These words contain a comprehensive, though short description of the majesty of the Supreme Being, and distinguish him from those whom we call fathers *on earth*: we should therefore draw near to him with reverence. *Hallowed be thy name*] By "name" we are here to understand God himself, who is often thus spoken of in the Scriptures. Exod. xxiii. 20, 21; Isa. xxx. 27; John xvii. 6. To "hallow" his name is, with reverence and joy to acknowledge his perfections, and to celebrate his praises; hallow being equivalent to glorify. While we thus regard the Deity, he will be sanctified in our thoughts, words, and actions.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Verse 10. *Thy kingdom come*] The word "kingdom" here means *reign*. The petition is the expression of a desire that the gospel of Christ may spread over the whole earth, and God's laws be everywhere obeyed; so that all men, being members of God's kingdom on earth, may finally be partakers of his glory in heaven. This prayer being enjoined us, it necessarily follows that our duty is to aid in promoting its accomplishment. *Thy will be done in earth*] The "will" is that faculty of the mind which chooses or determines. We do not here pray that God may do his will, but that his will may be done by us, and all other persons. We are sure that God's will is right and good, because, from the perfection of his character, he can neither desire nor do any thing but what is right and good; if he could, he would not be perfect. What that will is, he has revealed in the Holy Scriptures. *As it is in heaven*] Where holy angels execute his behests with readiness and cheerful obedience. As the will of God is necessarily good, and as perfect obedience to his will secures happiness, it follows that if his will were perfectly done by men, at all times, they would become happy. But men do not yield universal obedience to God, therefore they are not universally happy. That which prevents is sin, for all opposition to God's will is sin.

LESSON VI.

Sermon on the Mount, continued: Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer—Manner of Fasting.

MATT. vi. 11-23.

GIVE us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

NOTES ON MATT. vi. 11-23.

Verse 11. *Give us our daily bread*] By "bread" the Hebrews understood *all things necessary to subsistence*, and we attach the same meaning to the word in this place, for we here ask for no other temporal blessings. This petition honours God by acknowledging our entire and constant dependance upon his goodness for the supply of our daily wants; for although we labour for our bread, we are still dependant on God for it, and therefore pray, *Give us, &c.* It is also worthy of remark, that we refer the *kind* of food to him; like Agur we simply say, "Feed us with food convenient." But does this contemplate the supply of our *bodily* wants merely? We think not—but that it embraces, also, that daily measure of grace necessary for the strengthening of the soul.

Verse 12. *And forgive our debts*] Or *sins*, as the word is rendered in Luke xi. 4. In the language in which Christ spoke, "sin" and "sinner" are called "debt" and "debtor." The idea is this:—We all owe obedience to God; when we fail of rendering that obedience, either by doing things we ought not, or by leaving undone what we ought to perform, we become

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

sinner, or, in the idiom of that language, "debtors." *Justice* requires that the obligation should be fulfilled, or, in case of failure, that we should be punished. Our petition is, that God would *forgive the debt*, and so secure us against the infliction of the penalty. This is what we term pardon, or justification. *As we forgive our debtors*] "As" imports *similitude*,—in the *same manner*. The idea is well expressed in two lines of a well-known poem:—

"The *mercy* I to others show,
That *mercy* show to me."

The word "debtors" is not here used in its literal sense—*one who owes money*, but as in the first part of the verse, and signifies *offenders*. The thought is this: forgive us, O Lord, in the same manner as we forgive those who trespass against us. But what if we do not forgive offences which have been committed against us? Then, we pray that God may deal with us in like manner—in other words, that he would *not* forgive us. Lord, forgive *us*, and help *us* to forgive! But we are not to suppose that because God forgives our sins we are therefore acquitted of all obligation to him, for although the claims of *justice* are satisfied, yet by the act of forgiveness we are made debtors to his *mercy*.

Verse 13. *And lead us not into temptation*] The original word rendered "temptation" signifies trial of any kind, and so the word temptation was formerly used, though now it is commonly understood to express solicitation to sin. The word occurs in the first chapter of James in both these senses. In verses 2, 3, 12, it is

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you :

used in the first, or general sense ; in verse 13, in the restricted acceptance. Temptation, in the mere sense of trial, is a part of the necessary discipline of every Christian, and is frequently resorted to by our heavenly Father, to call into exercise the graces he has bestowed on us, and to perfect our faith in him. Temptation, in the sense of solicitation to sin, is what every one must expect to encounter, though not from God, who, in this sense, tempts no man. James i. 13. *Such* temptations arise, in part, from our own depraved appetites and passions, and partly from the malevolence of Satan, hence termed the Tempter. 1 Thess. iii. 5. But if we are faithful to God, not even such temptation shall overcome us. As some circumstances, company, and employments are more exposed to solicitations to evil than others, it becomes us to show the sincerity of our prayer by avoiding them as much as possible, lest we be enticed into such a course as may prove our destruction. To “lead” is a figurative expression for *to permit*, or *suffer* :—representing God as doing what he *only suffers* to be done, a mode of speech often made use of in the Bible. See Jer. iv. 10. The sense is,—Suffer not such an amount of trial, of any kind, to come on us as will overcome us. *But deliver us from evil*] “Deliver” here implies not merely *rescue*, but the being entirely kept from evil. “Evil” may mean such sin as results from the too great pressure of trial, or from yielding to temptations to do wrong ; or it may, possibly, signify the evil one, that is, Satan. *For thine is the kingdom*] The dominion or rule ; thou hast a perfect right to control all things. *The power*] Thou hast not only a right to

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites,

command, but art possessed of ability to perform all we ask or need. *And the glory*] The honour or praise resulting from the exercise of thy goodness and power. *For ever*] All the honour shall be given thee, now and always. *Amen*] This word is derived from the Hebrew, and is used either at the beginning or the end of a sentence. In the former case, it is solemnly affirmative of the truth and importance of what follows, and has the sense of *truly, verily, indeed*; in the latter, it signifies *so be it, or, so it shall be*.

Verse 14. *If ye forgive men their trespasses*] Faults, offences. *Your heavenly Father will forgive you*] That is, if no other condition of salvation be wanting: not that the forgiveness of injuries will *entitle* us to the pardon of God, but our pardoning others is *one* of those qualifications which are indispensably requisite to fit us for the gracious gift of eternal life. Forgiveness of injuries is constantly enjoined on us in the Bible, if such forgiveness be sought for, accompanied by evidence of repentance. Luke xvii. 3, 4. We do not think, however, that we are required to forgive the offender unless such forgiveness be asked. But even where pardon is not sought, we are by no means to allow malice, hatred, or desire of revenge to dwell within our hearts.

Verse 15. *If ye forgive not, neither, &c.*] Because such a spirit does not comport with a sense of true penitence.

Verse 16. *When ye fast*] The word rendered "fast" originally signified *not to eat*; strictly speaking, therefore, fasting consists in entirely abstaining from food

of a sad countenance : for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

[and drink, implied] for a prescribed time, usually from morning to evening. It is also used, in a qualified sense, to denote *partial* fasting, or *abstinence*; that is, the eating less than usual. In order that the fast should be a religious one, it must be done from a religious motive. Fasting seems to be a very natural expression of grief, of whatsoever character, for it is well known that when people are affected with any violent emotion, such as sorrow or fear, they often lose their usual relish for food, and sometimes even loathe it for the time being. Religious fasting, then, is an expression of sorrow for sin, and of a desire to obtain help to overcome it. It thus becomes a means of grace. In addition to this, fasting has a natural tendency to weaken evil passion; for all experience testifies that the fullest fed are usually the most subject to violent passions. In the Old Testament are several notices of public as well as private fasts, though but one public fast was expressly by divine command, namely, on the day of annual expiation, all others being left to the sense of need and propriety of those concerned.* Private fasts were very frequent among the Jews of our Saviour's time, as appears from Luke xviii. 12, and other passages; and it is said that stated fast-days had also greatly increased. *Be not as the hypocrites are*] For the definition of "hypocrite" see verse 2. *Of a sad countenance*] The original im-

* Note.—There is nothing said of *fasting* in the texts referring to the celebration of this day, the injunction being to *afflict the soul*. Commentators, however, are unanimously of opinion that a *fast* is meant. Comp. with Isa. lviii. 5-7

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

plies a *morose, sour, scowling* aspect. Dr. Clarke well observes:—A hypocrite has always a difficult part to act: when he wishes to appear as a penitent, not having any godly sorrow at heart, he is obliged to counterfeit it the best way he can, by a gloomy and austere look. *They disfigure their faces*] To “disfigure” signifies, *to change the appearance of, to deform*. It was customary among the Jews to put ashes on their heads during fasts, which of course disfigured or blackened their faces. Hence the Jewish rabbins speak of some of their famous doctors whose faces were constantly black by reason of fastings.—*Pict. Bible*. At such times they also neglected the customary attentions to cleanliness and neatness, such as washing, combing the hair, trimming the beard, &c. *Appear unto men to fast*] “Appear” is not here used in the sense of *deceiving*, but simply that they used those external signs of humiliation, that they might be seen of men.

Verses 17, 18. *When thou fastest, anoint thy head, &c.*] Appear among men as usual. Anointing the body after washing with fragrant oil (olive oil, made fragrant by the admixture of perfumes) was a common practice with the Jews, and other eastern nations, (see Ruth iii. 3,) and, in those warm climates, is exceedingly refreshing. The rabbins, however, forbade both washing and anointing on occasions of fasting, as being inconsistent with the design of that practice.

We learn from this passage that fasting, though not here positively enjoined, is a Christian duty, as appears

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal :

from our Lord's teaching his disciples how they ought to fast, and promising a reward from God to those who performed it aright.

Verse 19. *Lay not up treasures upon earth*] Our Saviour here guards his followers against the sin of avarice. By "treasures" we may understand all kinds of valuables. A large proportion of the wealth of eastern nations consisted of a profusion of costly garments, as well as gold and silver ; (hence the allusion to the moth, James v. 1, 2.) *Moth and rust do corrupt*] The moth is properly a winged insect flying by night, as it were a night butterfly, and may be distinguished from day butterflies by its antennæ, which are sharp at the points, and not tufted. It is of a silver or pearl colour. This creature, however, undergoes a transformation somewhat similar to that of the caterpillar, and it is the grub or worm which destroys clothing, on which it feeds until transformation takes place. "Rust" comes from a word which signifies to *eat into*, to *gnaw*, hence applied to the corroding of metals, the destruction of grain by smut, or, in an extended sense, the wasting of any property by corrosion or decay. Our Lord does not mean by this to denounce a due regard to worldly business, or the acquisition of property, but he teaches us that there is danger in the pursuit, for when riches increase, a man is apt to set his heart upon them. When properly used, riches are a great blessing, because they enable their possessor to do much good.

Verse 20. *Lay up treasures in heaven, &c.*] By acts

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light :

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !

of benevolence to man, and a life of devotion to God, through faith in Christ. These are riches of which the rude hand of death cannot rob a man, and the reward of which will be increasing to all eternity.

Verse 21. *Where your treasure is, &c.*] The heart, or affections, will necessarily be fixed on what we deem our chief good—if spiritual, heavenly delights be so regarded, our desires will be heavenward ; if temporal riches or pleasures hold the first place in our mind, then we shall seek most eagerly for *them*. Mr. Wesley's rule we believe to be a good one—1st. Gain all you can, (without hurting yourself or your neighbour ;) 2d. Save all you can ; 3d. *Give* all you can. If you do thus, you render earthly riches a blessing, instead of a curse.

Verses 22, 23. *The light of the body is the eye*] The word translated “light” properly means *lamp*, our steps and motions being directed by the eye, as in the dark we use a lamp for the same purpose. *If thine eye be single*] Or sound : that is, in a healthy state, so that vision be perfect. *Thy body shall be full of light*] Things around will be clearly and distinctly perceived, and the steps safely taken. *If thine eye be evil*] By “evil eye” here we must necessarily understand a *dis-eased* eye, whereby the vision becomes confused and dim, otherwise the figure will not hold good. *Thy body*

LESSON VII.

Sermon on the Mount, continued: On Serving God and Mammon—Care of Worldly Things.

MATTHEW vi. 24-34.

NO man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

shall be full of darkness] Thy way obscure, and thy steps unsteady, like those of a dizzy man.

If we interpret the eye to mean, by an easy and common metaphor, the understanding, or practical judgment, a natural and most important sense unfolds itself, which is well expressed by Baxter: "If, therefore, thy judgment be sound, and thou knowest the difference between laying up a treasure in heaven and on earth, it will rightly guide the actions of thy heart and life; but if thy judgment be blinded in this great affair, it will misguide thy affections, thy choice, and the whole tenour of thy life. If that judgment then be blind, which in this affair of everlasting moment ought to guide thee aright, what a miserable wretch wilt thou be, and how fatal will that error prove!"

NOTES ON MATT. vi. 24-34.

Verse 24. *No man can serve two masters]* Decision of character, prompt and constant, seems here to be enjoined. The language forcibly reminds us of Elijah's urging the Israelites to a decision between the claims

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

of Baal and Jehovah: "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." It is implied by the context that the two masters are of contrary views and possess conflicting interests:—of course, no man could serve two masters of such character. *He will hate one*] "Hate" here simply signifies to love *less*; a sense which the word frequently has in the Scriptures. See Luke xiv. 26. *Hold to the one*] The original word translated "hold" is said to imply more than the one rendered "love," as denoting "close connection and strict attachment." *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*] "Mammon" is the Syriac word for *riches*, and is represented by our Lord as a person whom the folly of man had deified. In this term all the things so eagerly desired by men of the world appear to be comprehended. The love of God, and an inordinate love of riches, cannot exist together, for to serve God acceptably is to serve him absolutely, to love him supremely, to confide in him fully, and so readily to submit to his commands of generous liberality in the use of money as to show riches to be our servants, not our masters, which is incompatible with the *love of them*.

Verse 25. *Therefore*] On this account: that ye may not serve mammon. *Take no thought for your life, &c.*] That is, no anxious thought concerning your subsistence: (see Phil. iv. 6:) for simple thoughtfulness and a moderate care are both necessary to that prudent and industrious conduct by which, under God's blessing, our daily wants are appointed to be supplied. *Is not the*

26 Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature ?

life more than meat, &c.] That is, of more *value* than meat ; and it follows, therefore, that God, who has given life, the *nobler* gift, will take care to sustain it with food ; and He who has so curiously formed the *body*, so that it is a wonderful monument of his power and skill, will not deny to it the raiment which it needs. In illustration of this sentiment, Christ refers to the fowls of the air and the flowers of the field.

Verse 26. *Behold the fowls of the air]* Not those of the barn yard, for which man provides, but those who have no visible provider,—the fowls of the air. Yet even these are provided for by Him who hath given them life. The fowls here are considered the representatives of all the inferior creatures, of the different orders of which David says : “ All these wait on thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season.” *Are ye not much better than they]* Of more consequence, as being spiritual, rational, immortal, redeemed creatures.

Verse 27. To show more clearly the folly of anxiety about earthly things, the Saviour here adduces an illustration drawn from man’s imbecility, or weakness. *Which of you by taking thought]* By all your calculation and anxious labour. *Can add one cubit unto his stature]* The “cubit,” Calmet observes, was originally the distance from the elbow to the extremity of the middle finger, which is the fourth part of a well-proportioned man’s stature. The cubit is commonly supposed to measure about eighteen inches, though some make it

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin;

twenty-two. "Stature" literally means height. Here, however, it probably signifies age, a meaning which the original sometimes has. See John ix. 21, where the same word is so rendered. Mr. Roberts, the missionary before quoted, says: "This form of speech is still sometimes used to humble those of high pretensions: thus, a man of low caste, who has become rich, and who assumes authority in consequence, will be asked, What! has your money made you a cubit higher? Is a man ambitious of rising in society? one who wishes to annoy him will put his finger on his elbow, and showing that part to the tip of the middle finger, asks, Will you ever rise thus much, (a cubit,) after all your cares?"

Our Saviour's meaning is, that as with all our anxiety we can add nothing to the duration of our lives, we ought to commit our cares to God, who will supply our wants so long as he continues us in existence. Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Verse 28. *Consider*] Attentively survey. *The lilies of the field*] The lily is a well-known plant, of the class hexandria, or having six stamens, and order monogynia, or having one style. We are not here to understand the common white lily of our gardens, which is said to be unknown in Palestine, but another of the same class, which is thus described in the *Pictorial Bible*:—"The amaryllis lutea, or yellow amaryllis, bears some resemblance to our yellow crocus, but with a larger flower and broader leaves. The blossom emerges from an undivided sheath, and is of a bell-shaped contour, with six divisions and six stamens,

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field,

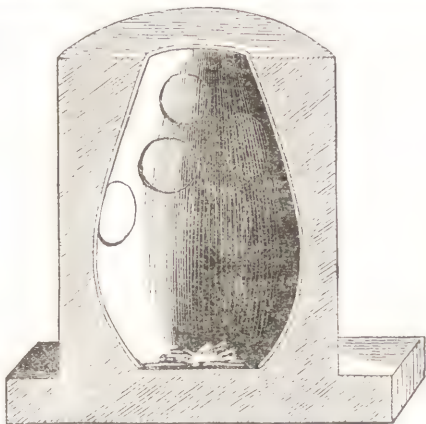
which are alternately shorter. The flower seldom rises above three or four inches above the soil, accompanied by a tuft of green leaves, which, after the flowering is past, continue to wear their freshness through the winter. It is in its prime in September and October." In noticing this flower that distinguished botanist, Sir J. E. Smith, observes: "It is natural to presume that the divine Teacher, according to his usual custom, called the attention of his hearers to some object at hand; and as the fields of the Levant are overrun with the *amaryllis lutea*, whose golden lilaceous flowers afford one of the most brilliant and gorgeous objects in nature, the expression—Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these—is particularly appropriate." *They toil not*] To cultivate the earth which nourishes them. *Neither do they spin*] To array themselves with their splendid vestments: but they are arrayed in their beauty by the hand of God.

Verse 29. *Solomon*] The most magnificent of the Jewish kings. 1 Kings x. 14–21. *In all his glory*] His splendour. *Was not arrayed like one of these*] Arrayed here means clothed, or ornamented.

Verse 30. *Wherefore, if God so clothe*] The original implies the *putting on a complete dress*, and is used with peculiar beauty for that strong, external membrane which, like the skin in the human body, at once adorns the tender structure of the vegetable, guards it against injuries, and performs for it many important services. *The grass*] The word rendered "grass" includes all kinds of herbage and flowers. *Which to-day is, and*

which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

to-morrow is cast into the oven] It was usual in those parts to heat ovens with the stalks of every species of herbage, which, being cut and spread to dry one day, were ready for fuel the next. The most common oven in the east is a circular pit dug in the earth, about four or five feet deep, and about three feet in diameter. This pit is well plastered within, and the cakes, which are not thicker than pancakes, are dexterously thrown against the sides of the heated oven. The kind of oven represented in the cut is a strong, unglazed earthen ves-



sel, three feet high, and about fifteen inches in diameter at the top, which is open. It gradually widens toward the bottom, where there is a hole for the convenience of withdrawing the ashes. *Shall he not much more*

31 Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his

clothe you] The argument is, If God invest with so much richness and beauty the flowers of the field, which to-morrow may be cut down and used for fuel, will he not more certainly clothe you, who are of so much greater importance?

Verses 31, 32. *Therefore, take no thought*] No harassing, heart-dividing care about your earthly provision. *What shall we eat, drink, or wherewith be clothed*] For, in the first place, it is productive of no good, and in the second, it is sinful, evincing distrust of God's ability or goodness, or of both. *After these things do the Gentiles seek*] Earnestly seek, as the original imports. For having (through their perverseness) little or no knowledge of the true God, or of his providence, neither of that "better life" which is to come, they labour mainly for earthly good. But as ye possess the knowledge of God, it would be a shame to you to be thus anxious. *Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of such things*] Our Lord here argues from God's knowledge to his goodness. He knoweth, and therefore will bestow them; that is, on the supposition that ye ask for them in a proper manner, and in a right spirit.

Verse 33. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*] By "kingdom of God" we understand that subjection of the heart to him by which he shall have complete dominion therein. "Righteousness" is the fruit of God's reigning in the heart, and imports all

righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.

the holy dispositions or affections of the soul begotten by the Holy Spirit, and manifested by uprightness of conduct. *And all these things shall be added unto you*] The things here spoken of are, food, raiment, and whatever else may be needful. To seek the "kingdom of God" *first in order*, giving it the foremost place in our desires and pursuits, and *first in degree*, preferring it to all other things, is the condition on which these promises of the special care of our heavenly Father are suspended ; for though there is a general care in God for man, as his offspring, and the subject of his redeeming mercy, yet that particular, and more watchful, and tender care here spoken of is restrained to those who receive his kingdom, and seek his righteousness.

We hope the following practical illustration of the Lord's care for them that trust in him will be read with interest. Oliver Heywood, one of the ministers ejected for nonconformity in the days of Charles II. of England, being reduced to great straits in consequence, so that his children began to be impatient for want of food, called his servant Martha, (who would not consent to leave the family in their distress,) and said to her, "Martha, take a basket and go to Halifax : call on Mr. N. the shopkeeper, and desire him to lend me five shillings. If he is kind enough to do it, buy such things as you know we most want. In the meantime we will offer up our requests to Him who 'feedeth the young ravens when they cry.'" Martha went, but when she came to the house, her heart failed her, and she passed by the door again and again, without going in to tell her errand. Mr. N., standing at the shop door, called

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

her to him, and asked if she was not Mr. Heywood's servant. When she told him she was, he said to her, "I am glad to see you, as some friends have given me five guineas for your master, and I was just thinking how I could send them." Upon this she burst into tears, and told him her errand. He was much affected, and bid her come to him if the like necessity should return. Having procured the necessary provisions, she hastened back with them ; when, on her entering the house, the children eagerly examined the basket, and the father, having heard her narrative, smiled and said, "The Lord's word is true : they that seek him shall not want any good thing."

Verse 34. *Take no thought for the morrow*] The original in this place implies time to come in general—the future. *The morrow shall take thought*] By a kind of figure called prosopopœia, or personification, "the morrow" is considered as a person sufficiently thoughtful and careful for his own affairs, and needing no obtrusive offer of aid from another. The sense is : the future shall, through the providence of God, bring with it its necessary supplies to those who seek *first* the kingdom of God ; for though God *may* provide for others, he has made no *promise* to them. *Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*] The necessary temporal cares and trials of the present time are sufficiently great, without anticipating those of futurity.

LUKE vi. 37-42.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged : condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned : forgive, and ye shall be forgiven :

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good mea-

LUKE vi. 37-42.

Verse 37. *Judge not—condemn not*] Mr. Wesley says : “ Our Lord now proceeds to warn us against the chief hinderances of holiness. And how wisely does he begin with judging, wherein young converts are so apt to spend that zeal which is given them for better purposes.” The “judging” here spoken of is not to be understood of forensic judgments, nor of those unfavourable opinions which, from the clear evidence of their conduct, we reluctantly form of wicked and perverse persons ; but of hasty, censorious thoughts or views of others. The word imports a kind of curious inquiry into other men’s faults. *Condemn not*] The “judging” may refer to our own estimate, or opinion, the “condemning,” to the *utterance* or declaration of such opinion. *Ye shall not be judged—condemned*] The consequence of evil judging is, that we provoke a similar treatment of ourselves from others, as well as expose ourselves to the just retributions of eternity, when, unless the crime be repented of and forgiven, we shall be condemned as we have condemned others.

Verse 38. *Give*] To those who need your assistance. *And it shall be given unto you*] Implying that God’s blessing will rest on the charitable man ; and that, if a reverse should take place in his affairs, he will generally find that, having acquired the reputation of a kind, benevolent man, his fellow-beings will be the more ready to

sure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them; Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

assist him in the hour of distress: while the parsimonious, sordid person will find but few to pity or succour him. *Good measure*] A fair and full measure. *Pressed down, shaken together*] Some articles will bear pressing without injury, and may so be brought into a much smaller space than they *naturally* occupy;—while others do not lie closely or compactly unless shaken, to make them settle down. *What measure ye mete*] Or, give. Our Saviour's meaning is, that a liberal return, whether of good for good, or of evil for evil, will be rendered to us by our fellow-men. *Into your bosom*] This phrase refers to the use made of the folds of their long robes to carry dry articles in, as corn or fruit. A recent traveller (the Rev. J. D. Paxton) says: "The usual dress in Palestine is a long robe not much unlike a woman's gown, which is fastened about the waist with a girdle. The part of the dress above the girdle is used for stowing away all sorts of things—handkerchiefs, when they have any; bread, fruit, &c.: nothing comes amiss—they put all into the bosom. As the receptacle goes all round the body, it is equal to three or four of those great pockets our great-grandmothers used to wear."

Verse 39. *He spake a parable*] He used a proverb or similitude. *Can the blind lead the blind?*] As one blind man cannot safely lead another, neither can those who are not illuminated from above be safe guides in spiritual things.

40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Verse 40. *The disciple is not above his master, &c.*] "Disciple" means *learner, scholar*, and "master" *teacher*. Thus far the meaning seems to be, If ye be ignorant of the way of life, ye cannot give such instruction as will guide others therein, for the learner cannot be presumed to be better instructed than his teacher; the perfection at which he aims is, to be *as* his teacher. *But every one that is perfect*] Truly, fully, thoroughly instructed in divine things. *Shall be as his master*] In other words, the end of our discipleship is, to be made like Christ, and this shall be the glorious result if we continue to follow him.

Verse 41. Christ here resumes the subject of censorious judging. *Why beholdest thou*] Dost search for. *The mote*] The original word signifies any small, dry substance, and has been not inaptly rendered *splinter*. This, and a *beam*, its opposite, were proverbially used to denote, the one, small infirmities, the other, gross, palpable faults. A just sense of our own imperfections will cause us to entertain charitable views of others.

Verse 42. *Cast out first the beam, &c.*] Let reformation begin at home. *And then shalt thou see clearly, &c.*] Freedom from vice is necessary to true spiritual discernment: it is not enough that we see the mote in

LESSON VIII.

Sermon on the Mount, concluded : Encouragement to the Performance of Various Duties.

MATT. vii. 6-29.

GIVE not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

the eye of our brother ; we must also see clearly how to cast it out, and that in tenderness and charity, without injury, and without offence.

NOTES ON MATT. vii. 6-29.

Verse 6. *Give not that which is holy, &c.*] Bishop Jebb, in his Criticism on Sacred Literature, has shown that the verse should be read thus :—

“ Give not that which is holy to the dogs,
Lest they turn again and rend you ;
Neither cast your pearls before swine,
Lest they trample them under their feet.”

It was customary among the ancient writers to denote certain classes of men by the names of animals of similar disposition. Our Saviour occasionally adopted the same concise, natural, and energetic mode of expression. See Matt. x. 16 ; Luke xiii. 32. In the present instance he uses the terms dogs and swine (both of which animals were detested by the Jews) to denote, the former, men of violent tempers and contentious spirits, and the latter, abandoned and profligate characters. The pearl is a well-known gem, of a brilliant white colour ; it is the production of a shell-fish of the oyster kind. The

7 Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you :

worth of pearls depends upon their size, shape, and lustre. Some of them are of great value. Our Saviour in one place compares the blessings of the gospel to a "pearl of great price," Matt. xiii. 46. By "holy things" and "pearls" in the text some commentators understand religious instruction and reproof, and suppose the import of the injunction to be, that it is useless to offer religious counsel to impudently and notoriously vile persons, who professedly hate instruction. From such, says Mr. Henry, one can expect no other than that they should, in scorn and rage, "trample" the reproofs "under their feet," and "rend" the reprover by reviling his good name, and doing him all the injury in their power. Mr. Wesley supposes matters of Christian experience are intended. His words are : "Talk not of the *deep things of God* to those whom *you know* to be wallowing in sin ; neither declare the *great things* God hath done for your soul to the profane, furious, persecuting wretches." With this interpretation, however, the writer must confess himself unsatisfied. As in the first five verses of this chapter we are warned against forming censorious judgments of others, may we not suppose that in this verse our Saviour intended to guard against the opposite extreme of not judging at all, lest his followers should associate with themselves in religious fellowship men of turbulent dispositions and unsanctified affections, who would shortly "turn again" to the world, "trample" the truths of the gospel under their feet, and thus bring disgrace on their profession and "rend" the society into which they had been incautiously admitted ?

8 For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?

11 If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts

Verse 7. *Ask, and it shall be given you, &c.*] We have in this and the succeeding verses an exhortation to prayer, with a gracious promise annexed to its right performance. It is our duty in *all* things by prayer and supplication to make known our requests unto God, (Phil. iv. 6,) but especial reference is here made to spiritual blessings. See the parallel text Luke xi. 13. For these we are to *ask* earnestly and importunately ; *seek* diligently and carefully, as for a lost treasure ; *knock*, as one who desires to enter a house knocks at the door.

Verse 8. *For every one that asketh receiveth*] That is, every one who asks aright. James iv. 3. Two things are necessary to the proper performance of this duty : 1st. That the blessings desired are such as God has promised to bestow ; “ If we ask any thing *according to his will*, he heareth us,” 1 John v. 14. 2d. That our petition be offered in faith : “ Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive,” Matt. xxi. 22. When we *thus* pray we shall not be disappointed of a blessing.

Verses 9-11. To remove every pretence for unbelief our Lord appeals to what passes in our own breasts. *What man is there of you*] Which of you, being a father, however depraved. *If his son ask bread will he give him a stone, &c.*] Will mock his wants by offering that which cannot be eaten. *If ye then, being evil*] That

unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men

is, sinful. *Know how*] Or, are accustomed. *To give good gifts to your children*] Being led to do so under the influence of mere natural affection. *How much more shall your Father in heaven*] Who is essentially and infinitely good. *Give good things*] Luke says, "give the Holy Spirit," which, as it is the greatest and best gift, includes the bestowment of all lesser good. *To them that ask him*] To all that ask in faith.

The force of this admirable illustration must, we think, be felt by all who notice it. Notwithstanding the natural depravity of men, they still love their offspring, and generally aim at supplying their wants: now if this be the case with sinful man, whose best affections have become blunted and warped, will not our heavenly Father, who is full of compassion, be much more ready to give us the things we need if we ask aright?

Verse 12. Our Saviour here enforces that righteousness toward men which is an essential branch of true religion. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*] That is, treat them in every instance as you would think it reasonable and right to be treated *by* them were you in their situation and they in yours. *For this is the law and the prophets*] It is the substance of that great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is one of the two "on which hang all the law and the prophets," Matt. xxii. 40. This admirable rule has been called, from its great value, THE GOLDEN RULE. It has commanded the esteem even of heathens; and Se-

should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate ; for wide *is* the gate,

verus, one of the Roman emperors, was so great an admirer of it that he had it written upon the walls of his closet, often quoted it in giving judgment, and honoured Christ and favoured the Christians on account of it. If all men would allow themselves to be governed by this simple law, what a change would be effected in the world ! Oppression, envy, malice, overreaching, with the host of vices which degrade men below the brute, would come to an end, and instead thereof we should rejoice in the peaceful fruits of righteousness and truth.

Verse 13. *Enter in at the strait gate*] “Strait” means narrow, difficult. A “gate” is a kind of door which guards the entrance to a road, dwelling, &c. It here applies to the entrance on the way which leads to eternal life, and is hence generally said to mean conversion or regeneration : we should rather, however, refer the “strait gate” to the fulfilling of the precept given in the preceding verse. The figure is of frequent occurrence in the sacred writings, and imports that through which men enter into the possession of a thing. *For wide is the gate, and broad is the way*] The course of human action is often compared to walking in a road or way, (Genesis vi. 12 ; Psa. cxix. 9,) and such way is termed good or bad, wide or narrow, according as the desires and conduct are more or less regulated by the requirements of God’s law. If, then, the action be unrestrained, the person allowing himself in the indulgence of his evil passions, he is said to walk in a *broad way*, not being under the controlling influence of virtue, and

and broad *is* the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat :

14 Because, strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

consequently no bounds being set to the gratification of his desires. *That leadeth to destruction*] The "destruction" here spoken of is the consequence of that course of iniquity typified by walking in the "broad way," and implies the utter ruin of soul and body in hell. *And many there be which go in thereat*] Not because they are not warned of the danger of so doing, for "Wisdom crieth aloud, she uttereth her voice in the streets," but because they love to indulge their corrupt inclinations. Alas ! how many there still are who reject the counsel of God against themselves, and work uncleanness with greediness !

Verse 14. *Because*] Or *how*, as the margin reads, *how strait ! Narrow is the way*] The requirements of God's law to a holy life being as so many defences to guard from wandering. As good old Matthew Henry says, The way is hedged *in*, but, thank God, it is not hedged *up*. The expressions in the text are strikingly applicable to the Christian system on account of the morality of conduct which it requires, and the purity of character which it enjoins. Heb. xii. 14 ; Mark ix. 43-47 ; Rom. viii. 13 ; John iii. 3. It calls for circumspection in thought, word, and deed, lest the believer should turn out of the way. Still we are not to suppose the religion of Christ is wanting in enjoyment, for the pleasures of piety are many and *real* ; the ways of religion *are* ways of *pleasantness* : but the joys thereof lessen not the difficulties of the way, they only animate us to surmount them. *Which leadeth unto life*] The "life"

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

to which this way leads is one of unending felicity in God's kingdom of glory. Psalm xvi. 11; Romans ii. 7. *And few there be that find it*] Because sin has blinded their eyes and perverted their judgment, so that they neither see the excellence of this way nor desire to walk in it.

Verse 15. *Beware of false prophets*] Strictly speaking, a "prophet" is one who foretels future and hidden events; but the term is also used to signify a teacher, an instructor, which is its meaning in this place; by "false" prophets we are to understand teachers of erroneous doctrines, "who," says Mr. Wesley, "describe a *broad* way to heaven." The scribes and Pharisees seem to be primarily intended, but the passage lies equally strong against all false teachers. The injunction to "beware" of them has the force of a prohibition, signifying not merely to be cautious of such teachers, but to avoid them altogether. *Which come to you in sheep's clothing*] The sheep is the emblem of innocence and harmlessness, characteristics well becoming the religious teacher. The meaning is, they come to you with professions of love, and with a fair appearance of religion. *But inwardly they are ravening wolves*] The cruel nature and rapacity of the wolf rendered that beast of prey a fit emblem of the Jewish doctors, whom our Lord so severely reproves for their *rapacity* and avarice, and whose rage against him could only be satisfied with *blood*. Mr. Watson says, "The emblem is equally descriptive of the corrupt priesthood of all fallen churches, [or the fallen priests of any church,] when not restrained by the civil authorities. Avarice is their sin, and de-

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

ception the means by which they gratify it." "A wolf in sheep's clothing" has become proverbial for a wicked man that makes a profession of religion, yet who cannot dissemble so well as not to be discovered by attentive observation.

Verse 16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits*] By "fruits" here we are to understand both their doctrines and lives: (1 Tim. iv. 16; James iii. 17, 18:) for though bad men may teach good doctrines, they never lead good lives. *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles*] The original words translated "thorn" and "thistle" are general names for all prickly shrubs. In Heb. vi. 8 the word which is here rendered "thistle" is translated "brier." From being placed in opposition to useful fruits, we may well suppose the "thorn" and "thistle" to have been noxious plants. "Grapes" are the fruit of the vine, and, when dried, are called raisins. "Figs" are the production of a tree, which in Palestine often grows to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and occasionally measures six feet in circumference. The fruit is produced from the trunk and large branches, and not from small shoots, as in most other trees.—*Harris*. The fig presents a very curious phenomenon, having no external blossom or flower. All persons acquainted with this fruit well know, that on opening the skin numerous seeds are to be seen; they may not, however, be aware that when the fig is opened in its *green* state, a small blossom occupies each spot afterward filled with a seed: these florets have not the appearance of a common blossom, as they are destitute of petals or leaves, and only possess the stamens and pointal.—*Botany of the Scriptures*.

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

The fig and grape rank among the more valuable productions of Asia, a part of Africa, and the south of Europe. In Palestine they are still common.

Verse 17. *Even so*] As grapes are not gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles, but every variety of plant produces fruit proper to itself. *Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit*] As good fruit is not produced by bad trees, neither will good trees produce bad fruit. In other words, No more will good men teach false doctrines, and be guilty of vicious conduct, than the thorn will produce grapes ; if, therefore, any man teach and practise evil, he cannot be a good man. *But a corrupt tree*] By "corrupt" tree we understand one *bad in kind*; not a decayed or rotten tree which had been good.

Verse 18. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, &c.*] Because it is contrary to its nature. See Luke vi. 45. Applied to teachers the meaning is, that good men will not, indeed we may say *cannot*, so long as they continue good, teach destructive doctrines, and lead vicious lives ; so neither can bad men long deceive by pretended sanctity. The hypocrite shall perish.

Verse 19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit*] Either produces none, or none but what is pernicious or useless. *Is hewn down and cast into the fire*] This verse most appositely closes this branch of the discourse by warning both false teachers and their deluded followers of their awful doom.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Verse 21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord]* That makes profession of faith in me. *Shall enter into the kingdom of heaven]* "Kingdom of heaven" sometimes means the church of God on earth; sometimes, the gospel dispensation; it here means the kingdom of glory. *But he that doeth the will of my Father]* The apostle Paul tells us, that "without faith it is impossible to please God;"—we here learn that *faith* alone is not all that is required of us; hence we infer the necessity of evangelical obedience, that by the union of these, the Christian character may be complete. Where either of them is wanting, the approbation of God abides not.

Verse 22. *Many will say in that day]* Namely, the day of judgment. *Have we not prophesied in thy name]* Not merely confessed thee ourselves, but instructed others, and even been endued with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to foretel future events, and to do "many wonderful works." From this it seems that the ability to work miracles is not an infallible evidence of being "a teacher sent from God;"—though it is also certain, that no man can perform such astonishing works, unless by the aid or permission of God.

Verse 23. *Then will I profess]* The original implies *open and public declaration.* *I never knew you]* To

24 Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock :

“know” here signifies to *approve*—I never approved you. 2 Tim. ii. 19. This shows that they had never been *wholly* devoted to Christ. *Depart from me*] What a dreadful separation! From *ME*—the source of all happiness! *Ye that work iniquity*] “Iniquity” comes from a word which signifies *unjust*, and denotes that kind of wickedness which consists in violating the law of right between man and man. Though these words were primarily spoken of false teachers, they also foretel the doom of false disciples. “There is some difficulty,” says Mr. Watson, “in conceiving how miraculous gifts should be possessed by those whom our Lord calls ‘workers of iniquity.’ If it be urged that such persons might have fallen from a grace they once possessed, we are met by the strong negative, ‘I never knew you.’ Still, it does not follow that these gifts were bestowed at first on men entirely devoid of true religious feeling, but rather that they were superficial and halting in their best state of mind, although under that degree of religious influence which, if improved, would have led to full salvation. They could never, therefore, be fully approved by Christ, though admitted as disciples. The possession of miraculous gifts never appear to have been among the appointed means of grace, and were never regarded as infallible evidences of it.”

Verse 24. *Whosoever heareth these sayings, and doeth them*] The conclusion of this discourse tends solemnly to impress the whole on our attention. The result, as to our eternal interests, depends on our HEARING and DOING Christ's sayings; so that they are presented

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and

to us in the very form of Christian LAW, with the sanctions of life and death annexed. *I will liken him*] To "liken" is to *compare*. *To a wise man*] This man's wisdom consisted both in speculative knowledge, and a prudent use of that knowledge in building his house upon a rock. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil."

Verse 25. *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, &c.*] Palestine, in common with all countries within or bordering on the tropics, is subject, in what is termed the rainy season, to very heavy and long-continued rains, which are frequently accompanied by violent gusts of wind. These rains produce land torrents, which, rushing from the higher to the lower ground, sweep every thing before them. The rivers also become suddenly swollen and impetuous, so that it is dangerous to ford them. By these three words, *rain, winds, and floods*, the severity of our great trials during life, and more especially in the hour of death and at the day of judgment, is strongly pointed out.

Verse 26. *Every one that heareth and doeth not shall be likened to a foolish man*] Foolish, because he did not guard against danger. *Which built his house on the sand*] Here is the evidence of his folly, as the loose earth could not resist the action of the winter's torrent.

Verse 27. *The rain, floods, and winds beat upon that house, and it fell*] The rains, floods, and winds of an eastern monsoon give a striking illustration of this pas-

the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it.

sage. When people in those regions speak of the strength of a house, it is not by saying it will last so many years, but, "It will outstand the rains: it will not be injured by the floods." Houses built of the best materials, and having deep foundations, in a few years often yield to the rains of a monsoon. And who can wonder at this, when he considers the state of the earth? For several months there is not a drop of rain, and the burning sun has loosened the ground, when at once the torrents descend, the chapped earth suddenly swells, and the foundations are moved by the change. The house founded on a rock can alone stand the rains and floods of a wet monsoon.—*Roberts*. This illustration may not, in its fullest extent, apply to Palestine, but similar causes certainly operated in some degree.

Those who "hear and do" Christ's sayings may be aptly compared to one who "digs deep, and builds his house on a rock," inasmuch as true faith unites to Christ, and ready obedience builds up in him, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. And as a house is designed to shelter from inclemency of weather, and to protect against the attacks of enemies, so Christ is to the believer a "covert from the storm," a "refuge for the oppressed."

Observe, reader, that although we have no other foundation on which to build our hopes of eternal life than Jesus Christ, yet we pretend in vain to build on him if we do not obey his teachings, and make them the rule of our whole conduct: for as surely as the elements of nature will try the stability of a house, so will the trials of life test the grace we may possess, and unless we

28 And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

MATTHEW viii. 1.

1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

are grounded and settled in Christ by loving faith and active obedience, we shall at last be as a house without foundation, and sink into ruin. O build on the rock, Christ Jesus!

Verse 28. *The people were astonished at his doctrine*] It was so different from what they had been accustomed to hear from their own teachers, so clear and full, so practical and hallowed, so solemn and weighty, so searching and convincing, that they were *struck with astonishment*. Reader, what thinkest thou? These are indeed the TRUE SAYINGS of God.

Verse 29. *As one having authority*] Not as a mere interpreter of an existing law, but as the *maker* of the law; giving his interpretations the same authority as the original precept, and adding others of equal obligation and consequence. May we not suppose, too, that there was a marked dignity about his manner? *And not as the scribes*] Whose lectures, says Macknight, were, for the most part, absolute trifling. The scribes, in their teaching, were in the constant habit of appealing to the statements of their distinguished rabbins. This practice of referring to human authority renders our Lord's usual formula, *I say unto you*, the more remarkable and striking.

LESSON IX.

The Centurion's Servant healed—Raising of the Widow's Son.—MATT. viii. 5-13; LUKE vii. 1-18.

LUKE vii. 1-10.

NOW, when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

MATTHEW viii. 1.

Verse 1. *And when he was come down from the mountain*] Where he had delivered this discourse; (see Matt. v. 1;) supposed by many to be the mount now known as the mount of Beatitudes. *Great multitudes followed him*] Probably with the expectation of being still further instructed in his doctrine, and of witnessing additional proofs of his benevolence and power in healing diseases.

NOTES ON LUKE vii. 1-10.

Verse 1. *Now when he had ended all his sayings*] That is, the discourse commonly called the sermon on the mount, which is particularly recorded in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew. *In the audience of the people*] "Audience" here means *hearing*. *He entered into Capernaum*] The Rev. Mr. Jowett says: "Now from this very spot (the mount of Beatitudes) there is a road passing through a ravine direct to the lake of Tiberias, [on the east,] and from thence to the present site of Capernaum; the distance hence to the lake being about two hours and a half. This ravine is

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

the caravan road from Damascus to the south. Although no absolutely certain evidence is deducible from this sketch, yet we felt it heighten our interest in the scene to trace, as nearly as might be, with the gospels in our hand, and the very country before us, every step of our Lord's course." [For a description of Capernaum, see p. 115.]

Verse 2. *And a certain centurion's servant*] A "centurion" was a Roman officer of foot, commanding a corps of a hundred men, as the title imports, coming from *centum*, a hundred. He was probably in the service of Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, which office Herod held by permission of the Romans. *Who was dear unto him*] The servant was doubtless a diligent and trustworthy man, in consequence of which he was esteemed. *Was sick, and ready to die*] Matthew says, (viii. 6,) he was *sick of the palsy, grievously tormented*. "Palsy," says Dr. Clarke, "is defined to be a sudden loss of tone and vital power in a certain part of the human body. It may affect a limb, the whole side, the tongue, or the whole body. It was incurable, (except by the miraculous power of God,) unless in its slighter stages." Treating of this disease, Horne says: "The palsy of the New Testament is a disease of very wide import, and comprehends not fewer than five different maladies, viz.; *apoplexy*, a paralytic shock which affects the whole body; *hemiplegy*, which affects and paralyzes only one side of the body; the case mentioned Matt. ix. 2 appears to have been of this sort; *paraplegy*, which paralyzes all parts of the system below the neck; *catalepsy*, which is caused by a contraction of the mus-

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

cles in the whole or part of the body ; instances of this malady occur in Matt. xii. 10 and John v. 3, 5 ; and the *cramp*, which, in oriental countries, is a fearful malady, and by no means unfrequent. It is caused by the chills of the night : the limbs, when seized with it, remain immoveable, sometimes turned in, and sometimes out, in the very same position as when they were first seized. The person afflicted resembles a man undergoing the torture, and experiences nearly the same sufferings. Death follows this disease in a few days. The centurion's servant is supposed to have laboured under this last-named form."

Verse 3. *And when he heard of Jesus*] That he was in Capernaum. *He sent unto him*] Matthew says that the centurion *came* to Jesus. There is, however, no real contradiction, as it is common in all languages to ascribe to the person himself the thing which is done, and the words which are spoken, by his order. For a similar case, compare Matt. xx. 20 with Mark x. 35-37, where James and John speak through their mother. *The elders of the Jews*] By "elders" we may understand either the magistrates of the town, or the rulers of the synagogue which the centurion had built. It was anciently the custom of the Jews to intrust the management of public affairs to persons advanced in years, as having most wisdom and experience, who were thence called *elders*. The title is still continued to the office, without respect to age. *Beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant*] Christian masters may learn from this act of the centurion to treat their domestics,

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this :

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

and all under their authority, with kindness and affection.

Verses 4, 5. *And when they*] The Jewish elders. *Came to Jesus, they besought him instantly*] Entreated him with great earnestness. *Saying, That he was worthy, &c.*] The centurion seems to have been a proselyte to the Jewish faith. *He loveth our nation*] Loved them as having the knowledge of the true God among them; for we can conceive no other ground on which a Roman could love a people so generally despised by his countrymen as the Jews were by the Romans. *And hath built us a synagogue*] The term "synagogue" formerly signified an *assembly*; but, like the word *church*, it is now applied to places of public resort, especially to those appointed for the worship of God, according to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law. It does not appear from the Scriptures that synagogues were of any prescribed form, though we remember to have seen it stated by one author that in their form and arrangement they resembled the ancient temple. Mr. Allen, in his *Modern Judaism*, says that the door, or, if there be more than one, the principal door of the synagogue, is usually placed as nearly facing Palestine as the situation of the building will allow. At the end opposite the entrance is a closet or chest, which is called the *ark*, in which are deposited the sacred books. Near the middle is a desk or altar formed by a raised platform, surrounded by a railing, which is generally large enough to admit several persons. The seats are so arranged that the

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof;

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come

people (or congregation) sit with their faces toward the place where the law is kept, while the *elders* or officers of the synagogue sit facing the people.* It seems to be certain that they do not sit *behind* the desk, for it is expressly said that "no seats are admitted between the altar and the ark." These seats, being placed nearer the ark than are those of the congregation, are accounted the more holy, and hence they are, in the New Testament, termed the *chief seats*. The women are not allowed to mix with the men, but a separate part is allotted to them on the same floor, or, where there is a gallery, it is exclusively appropriated to their use; but, whatever be their station, they are screened from the observation of the men by a wooden lattice. The building of synagogues, and presenting them to the community, was considered a most meritorious and acceptable act, and a mark of piety. Matthew represents Jesus as answering these messengers of the centurion, saying, *I will come and heal him*.

Verses 6, 7. *The centurion sent to him, saying, Lord—I am not worthy*] Mark the humility of the centurion, so different from the self-importance of the Jewish rulers. This expression of unworthiness cannot be construed into one of the unmeaning professions common to the orientals, for the man was in all probability a Roman. *But say in a word*] It is not necessary that thou should—

* This is not the *invariable* custom, for the writer knows of at least one synagogue where the officers sit on each side of the pulpit, *facing each other*.

unto thee ; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

est enter my dwelling, and there rebuke the disease ; give the command *now* where thou art. *And my servant shall be healed*] Must not this man have had a perception of Christ's divine character ? He then goes on to show the ground of his faith, which he thus illustrates :—

Verse 8. *I am a man set under authority*] That is, subject to my superior officer. Centurions were not all of the same rank, though of the same office, being divided into three classes, named *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*, of which the *hastati* were the least honourable, and were subject to the commands of the *principes* and *triarii*. This centurion is supposed to have belonged to the *hastati*, and hence was under authority. We think, however, that this refinement in argument is unnecessary : as a mere centurion he was, of course, subject to the will of his superior officers. *I say to one, Go, and he goeth, &c.*] Though I myself am of inferior rank, being subordinate to others, yet, having soldiers under me, I say to one, *Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ;* obeying my word with instant promptitude and entire subjection : how much more shall all diseases, and therefore all natural things whatever, obey THEE, who hast *supreme authority* and *absolute power* in thyself.

Verse 9. *When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him*] Our Lord's marvelling on this occasion by no means implies that he was ignorant of the centurion's

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

faith, or of the grounds on which it was built. But as he possessed a real human, as well as a real divine nature, and is elsewhere represented as susceptible of the human affections of desire, aversion, joy, and sorrow, so he is here represented as influenced by *admiration*, an emotion excited by the greatness and beauty of an object as well as by its novelty and unexpectedness. *And said unto the people, I have not found so great faith*] The "faith" here spoken of means reliance on Christ's power to work the miracle in question. *No, not in Israel*] By "Israel" the Jews are meant, who are frequently so termed in the sacred writings, on account of their descent from Jacob, whose name was changed by Jehovah to that of Israel. It is fairly presumable from this passage that the centurion was a *Gentile*, and most probably a Roman. Through his residence in Judea, however, he had attained a knowledge of the true God, and seems to have given profound attention to the accounts of the character, teachings, and miracles of our Lord; and if he had made himself acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, of which there can be little doubt, he might regard him, not as a mere prophet, however great, but as that mysterious and exalted personage announced in those Scriptures as the Messiah. He certainly regarded him as something more than human.

MATTHEW viii. 11-13.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven :

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out

MATTHEW viii. 11-13.

Verse 11. *Many shall come from the east and west*] That is, from all parts of the earth. *And shall sit down*] As members of the same family. *With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*] The three most distinguished patriarchs of the Jewish nation. *In the kingdom of heaven*] In the kingdom of glory, as the context shows. 'This passage refers to the felicity of the believing Gentiles in heaven, where, so far from being placed in inferior circumstances to the Jews, they are represented as sitting (or rather reclining, in allusion to the recumbent posture which the Jews practised at their meals) with the glorified patriarchs themselves, a situation which indicates perfect familiarity. The Scriptures often represent the felicities of heaven by the image of a sumptuous entertainment; and though the joys of heaven are all of a spiritual kind, the metaphor need not be thought strange, since we can neither speak ourselves nor understand others speaking of our state in the life to come, unless we make use of phrases taken from the affairs of this life.

Verse 12. *But the children of the kingdom*] The Jewish people. This form of speech was very common among them to denote their relation to any person or thing; thus, "children of the light," those who follow the light; "children of the wedding," those invited to the wedding. "Children of the kingdom," then, means those

into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way;

who expected, and were particularly entitled to participate in, the kingdom of the Messiah. *Shall be cast out*] Shall be rejected or abandoned, as having forfeited all title to this kingdom. *Into outer darkness*] Here is an allusion to the eastern practice of making feasts at night, especially nuptial feasts. The house in which the guests were assembled was brilliantly illuminated with a profusion of lights, which were not only for use, but were symbols of joy and gladness. This abundance of light within, however, while it administered to the pleasure and comfort of the guests, would, by comparison, render the situation of those who were excluded the more miserable, especially as their being shut out was the consequence of their own misconduct. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*] These terms are expressive of deep remorse, acute agony, and of rage, and are too strong to indicate the mortification of being excluded from a mere feast; they therefore must be applied to the thing represented—exclusion from heaven, and the being cast into hell, called by Jude the “blackness of darkness for ever.” This passage teaches us that God will save true believers of all nations; but the obstinately wicked of every race shall be excluded from the felicities of his kingdom. Reader, of which class art thou?

Verse 13. *And Jesus said to the centurion*] “It appears,” says Mr. Wesley, “that the centurion at length came in person, probably on hearing that Jesus was nearer to his house than he apprehended when he sent the second message by his friends.” *Go thy way, and*

and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

LUKE vii. 11-18.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain : and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

as thou hast believed be it done unto thee] So the centurion's request was granted, in answer to his faith. *His servant was healed in the self-same hour*] Or, more correctly, at that very instant. Luke says, "They that were sent, on returning to the house, found the servant whole"—that is, perfectly cured : so that the power of Christ is herein strikingly manifested by the instantaneous cure of this palsied man.

LUKE vii. 11-18.

Verse 11. *And it came to pass the day after*] The day following the healing of the centurion's servant. *That he [Jesus] went into a city called Nain*] This city is twelve or thirteen miles south or southwest of Capernaum, about a mile south of mount Tabor, and lies on the north side of Hermon.—*Wells*. It derived its name from its pleasant situation, Nain signifying *beauty* or *pleasantness*. It is now a decayed village, containing between one and two hundred inhabitants, Mohammedans, Christians, and Jews. From its situation on the declivity of a mountain the scene of the miracle must have been rendered the more striking, as the funeral procession passed slowly out of the gate down the steep, on the bold breast of which the remains of the place now stand.—*Horne—Carne*. Luke is the only evangelist who notices this miracle.

12 Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

Verse 12. *When he came nigh to the gate of the city]* In Palestine, as well as in the east generally, towns and cities were surrounded by high walls, the better to secure the inhabitants from sudden attack. Before the use of cannon was known, if a town had a wall too high to be easily scaled, and too thick to be readily battered down, the inhabitants regarded the place as impregnable. The walls were generally built of large bricks dried in the sun. The inhabitants passed in and out through gates placed at convenient distances, which were strongly barred at night, and opened about sunrise in the morning. *There was a dead man carried out]* To burial. The general practice of the present inhabitants of Palestine (as it is of the east at large) is, to bury the dead outside the city, which is certainly much better than to inter them in the midst of a crowded population, as is too frequently the case among us. The practice of burying *in* or *near* churches is said to have originated among Christians, and is a relic of superstition, which regard to the health of the living calls on us to abolish. There seems to have been no fixed custom, among the ancient Jews, regulating the place of interment of the dead. Samuel was buried in his house, 1 Sam. xxv. 1; David was interred in Jerusalem, 1 Kings ii. 10; Manasseh was buried in his own garden, 2 Kings xxi. 18. The time of day was probably toward evening, that being the customary hour for interment among the Jews. —Doddridge. *The only son of his mother, and she*

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

was a widow] These circumstances excited the compassion of Jesus. *Much people was with her*] It was and still is customary among the Jews for men to attend the funerals of youths or adults in great numbers. If the deceased had been of vicious life, or grossly negligent of Jewish forms, such attendance is withheld.—*Ceremonies of the Jews*. Josephus says it was ordained among the Jews that all who pass by when any one is buried should accompany the funeral and join in the lamentation.

Verse 14. *He [Jesus] came and touched the bier*] At the same time, probably, commanding the bearers to stop. The "bier" is a kind of litter or hand-barrow, shaped somewhat like a coffin, and was used for carrying dead bodies to the grave: the corpse was laid on it, dressed in grave clothes, and the whole covered with a cloth. They usually required four persons to carry them. These biers are much used in Asia, and in the east of Europe. They are also common in Egypt. The body is usually laid in the tomb without a coffin. *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*] Here Christ speaks in mild, but authoritative terms, and, obedient to his summons, the freed spirit returns into its prison house.

Verse 15. *And he that was dead sat up*] Infidelity has endeavoured to set aside the evidence this miracle affords in favour of the divinity of Christ by suggesting that the man was in a *lethargy*! We confess, however, that such a view requires a greater stretch of credulity than we are capable of entertaining. *And began to*

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak : and he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all : and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us ; and, that God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

18 And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.

speak] A convincing proof of the reality of this resurrection. *Delivered him to his mother*] To attend on, and provide for her in her declining years, as became a dutiful son ; hereby showing that compassion for the affliction of the widow had induced him to perform this life-giving miracle. From this, and many other incidental circumstances in the gospel narrative, we learn that as *man* Jesus Christ was exceedingly compassionate ; as *God* his mercy was beyond all conception.

Verse 16. *And there came great fear on all*] A reverential awe, which had Jesus for its object, filled their minds. *They glorified God*] As the efficient author of this great miracle. *Saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us*] The inference of his being inspired they drew from the act he had performed. The prophetic office had been vacant since the days of Malachi, who, according to our common chronology, prophesied three hundred and ninety-seven years before Christ. *God hath visited his people*] The same expression, in part, as used by Zacharias. We may, therefore, conclude that these persons did, at this time, believe Jesus to be the Messiah.

Verse 17. *And the rumour, &c.*] The news of this miracle was extensively circulated, and wherever heard

LESSON X.

*Message from John the Baptist to Christ—Christ's
Testimony concerning John.*

MATT. xi. 2-15.

NOW when John had heard in the prison the works
of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

produced the conviction that Christ was sent from God,
and excited mighty expectation concerning him.

Verse 18. *The disciples of John showed him of these
things*] John the Baptist was at this time in prison,
having been placed there by Herod Antipas, tetrarch
of Galilee, in consequence of a rebuke which John had
given that prince, and at which he had taken offence.
The confinement, however, does not seem to have been
very rigid, as his friends were permitted to visit him.

NOTES ON MATT. xi. 2-15.

Verse 2. *Now when John had heard*] By means of
his disciples. *In the prison*] The castle of Macherus,
where, according to Josephus, John was imprisoned by
order of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, for reprov-
ing him for taking Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.
Matt. xiv. 3, 4. *The works of Christ*] His miracles.
He sent two of his disciples] To Jesus; (Luke vii. 19;)
not, however, for his own satisfaction, but to confirm
their faith in Christ, which he was probably desirous of
doing, both that Jesus might be honoured by them, and
that they might not be left without a guide when him-
self should be taken from them.

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk,

Verse 3. *Art thou he that should come*] Or rather, "he who cometh," which was a designation of the Messiah. Isa. lxii. 11; Matt. xxiii. 39. Perhaps there may be here a reference, also, to the prediction of Moses, recorded Deut. xviii. 18. When these messengers had come to Jesus, they informed him that John had sent them, and delivered their errand. Jesus, however, seems not to have answered them immediately, but to have gone on with the work in which they found him engaged—that of healing diseases, and instructing the people. Luke vii. 20, 21.

Verse 4. *Jesus*, having performed several miracles, &c., in their presence, *answered them, Go and show*] Rather, *relate to John. Those things which ye do hear and see*] Instead of giving an explicit answer, Jesus appeals to his works as proofs that he was the Messiah,—and, as these cures could not be performed by natural means, or accounted for on natural principles, we should suppose they furnished a much more convincing reply than any mere assertions, however positive. John, at least, would certainly be well able to appreciate the force of this evidence, and to enforce it on his disciples.

Verse 5. *The blind receive their sight, &c.*] By an examination of the Old Testament Scriptures, we shall perceive that it was predicted the Messiah should perform the very kind of miraculous acts here enumerated. Compare Isaiah xxxv. 4–6, and lxi. 1, 2, with Luke iv. 21. From John vi. 30 and vii. 31 we further learn that the Jews *expected* the Messiah to perform miracles

the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is *he* whosoever shall not be offended in me.

7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

in attestation of the truth of his mission. Yet notwithstanding this clear testimony to his divine character they would not receive Jesus as the Anointed of God, but crucified him. Strange infatuation! Let us take heed, lest we also should fall after the same example of unbelief. *The poor have the gospel preached to them*] Which, says Mr. Wesley, is the greatest mercy of all. The gospel is peculiarly the religion of the poor: neither Jewish rabbins nor heathen sages cared for them—THIS is the peculiar glory of the religion of Christ. The passage in Isaiah seems to have special reference to the poor in spirit.

Verse 6. *Blessed*] Happy. *Offended in me*] “Offended in” here means *stumbled at*, and intimates there was something in Christ’s character or circumstances which might prove a hinderance to these disciples of John receiving him as the Messiah. This difficulty could be nothing else than his lowly condition, which was so contrary to all their preconceived notions of the grandeur and power of Messiah’s kingdom, and his permitting their master, John, to be so long imprisoned. Knowing that these opinions existed in their minds, Jesus takes occasion to warn them and all others against their influence.

Verse 7. *As*] Or *when*, as Luke has it. *They departed*] To return to John. *Jesus began to say con-*

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

cerning John] The visit of John's disciples gave our Lord an opportunity to bear a most honourable testimony to his faithful though now imprisoned herald and forerunner. *What went ye out into the wilderness to see?*] The wilderness here referred to is that termed in Matt. iii. 1 "the wilderness of Judea," which, says Calmet, "began near Jericho, and extended to the mountains of Edom." *A reed shaken with the wind?*] A reed is a plant growing in fenny and watery places, very weak and slender, and bending with the least breath of wind.—*Harris*. It is the emblem of weakness and instability. The question implies a strong negation: thus, You did *not* see a man wavering in his testimony, but one who was firm and constant.

Verse 8. *A man clothed in soft raiment?*] One whose effeminacy and softness of dress and delicateness of living (Luke) bespoke the timidity and feebleness of his character, and who, like the courtiers of kings, would fawn and flatter? John was not such a man, being distinguished for his love of truth, plain dealing, and indifference to bodily ease; none of which traits generally belong to the attendants of a court. A love of ease, and fondness for rich attire, are always unfriendly to vigour of intellect and manliness of character.

Verse 9. *A prophet?*] John was truly a prophet, being sent by God, favoured with direct revelations, acting under the impulse of inspiration, and, like the ancient prophets, appointed both to warn a guilty people and to describe the character and glories of Messiah. *Yea,*

10 For this is *he* of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

and more (Luke says, *much more*) *than a prophet*] Than a mere prophet. John was himself the subject of prophecy, his coming being predicted by Isaiah and Malachi. Others foretold that the Messiah *would* come, he announced, first his *approach*, and afterward his *presence*; he saw the Spirit rest on Christ; and had the honour of consecrating him to his public ministry by baptizing him. In all these respects John was *more*, or superior to, more exalted, than a mere prophet. His peculiar glory, however, consisted in being the herald of Christ, sent to prepare his way.

Verse 10. *This is he of whom it is written*] In Malachi iii. 1. *I send my messenger before thy face*] An examination of the prophecy will show that the language is not strictly quoted. In Malachi Jehovah is represented as speaking in the *first* person, I will send my messenger before *me*; here, in the *second* person, before *thee*. The comparison proves Christ to be God.

Verse 11. *Verily*] Truly, certainly. *Among them that are born of women*] Among the whole race of mankind in all former ages. *There hath not risen a greater than John*] That is, a greater prophet. Luke vii. 28. *Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven*] The least prophet or teacher in the perfected dispensation of the gospel. *Is greater than he*] Having a more perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ, of his redemption and kingdom. 2 Tim. i. 10; Heb. vii. 10. As this

12 And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

dispensation, however, was not fully opened, Jesus not having suffered, and consequently its peculiar glory, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, not being yet given, Christ must have spoken in anticipation.

Verse 12. *From the days of John the Baptist until now*] From the commencement of John's ministry unto the time at which Christ was speaking. *The kingdom of heaven*] The gospel dispensation, as before. *Suffereth violence*] Through the eagerness of men to embrace it. "The allusion here," says Mr. Watson, "is to a siege, and the figure is taken from the rush of a multitude to take a city by assault." The words seem to refer to the eagerness with which the multitude received the testimony both of John and Christ, in spite of the calumnies heaped by their teachers and rulers upon both, and the rage which they often manifested. *And the violent take it by force*] The Jewish teachers, like the Gentile philosophers, confined their superior knowledge to persons of a certain class, and neglected and despised the body of the populace. "The people know not the law, and are accursed," was their contemptuous language; and hence they were left "as sheep having no shepherd." The preaching of John and Christ was popular; it was adapted to instruct and save the mass of society; and multitudes gladly heard from them that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." Thus did these neglected people "press into the kingdom of God," as far as it was then revealed; and, like a tumultuous rush of soldiers scaling the walls of a city, they appeared determined to seize the glorious truths which had so long

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

been withheld from them. Alas for them, that they did not hold out to the end!

Verse 13. *All the prophets and the law*] By "prophets" and "law" here we may understand the Old Testament Scriptures, which were frequently so denominated by the Jews. Matt. xxii. 40. The *law* comprised the five books of Moses, the *prophets*, the remainder of the sacred writings. *Prophesied until John*] "Prophesied," in this sense, would mean *instructed*, or *taught*; that is, they instructed in and taught the coming and nature of, Messiah's kingdom. The old dispensation, says Mr. Wesley, expired in John. Another sense of this passage is, that until John the law and the prophets *predicted* the spiritual reign of Messiah as though it were afar off; but John did not so properly PREDICT that kingdom as ANNOUNCE it to be "at hand." We think the latter the better exposition.

Verse 14. *If ye will receive it*] The original demands implicit faith, as though Christ had said, I *charge* you to believe. *This is Elias*] Or rather, Elijah. *Which was for to come*] Whose coming under that name was expressly foretold in Mal. iv. 5. We are not to suppose that he is the *real* prophet Elijah; for the angel, when he predicted to Zacharias the birth of his son, expressly said, he [John] should "go before [Christ] in the *spirit* and *power* of Elias;" and the resemblance between that prophet and the Baptist in mode of life, manners, and dress, but still more in *spirit*, and success in turning many to God, (Luke vii. 29, 30,) is remark-

LUKE vii. 31-35.

31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

ably conspicuous. The name Elias, or Elijah, as applied to John, was, therefore, merely figurative.

Verse 15. *He that hath ears, &c.*] An impressive form, soliciting patient attention to what is spoken, as being of great importance: such was this whole discourse concerning John, especially the prophecies respecting him, because their accomplishment gave the strongest testimony to the claims of Christ, whose forerunner he was.

LUKE vii. 31-35.

Verse 31. *Whereunto shall I liken*] Or compare. *The men of this generation*] Or age. By this expression the Pharisees and lawyers, who had "rejected the counsel of God against themselves," (verse 30,) seem to be intended.

Verse 32. *They are like unto children sitting in the market-place*] The original denotes not only market-places, but those broad places in the streets which are places of concourse, *like* market-places; probably meaning here places of amusement. *Calling one to another*] In their plays. *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, &c.*] It was usual in Judea, on occasions of rejoicing, to have music of a lively kind, accompanied with dancing; (Luke xv. 25;) and at funerals, melancholy airs, to which were joined the lamentations of the

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine ; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking ; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners !

35 But Wisdom is justified of all her children.

mourners. Matt. ix. 23. The children imitated these things in their diversions ; and if, while one band of them performed the musical part, the other, being dissatisfied, would not answer them by dancing or lamenting, as the game directed, it naturally gave occasion to this complaint, *We have piped, &c.*, which at length became a proverbial expression.

Verse 33. *For John came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine*] That is, he did not live a social life, but was austere and mortifying in his habits. *And ye (Pharisees) say, He hath a devil*] He is possessed by a demon, which drives him into solitude, and overwhelms him with melancholy.

Verse 34. *The Son of man*] The Lord Jesus. *Is come eating, &c.*] Mixing more familiarly with society, and allowing himself innocent gratifications. The Saviour seems to have been of an affable disposition, and to have taken pleasure in social intercourse. *And ye say, A gluttonous man, &c.*] One who indulges to excess in eating and drinking. *A friend of publicans and sinners*] Thus insinuating, also, that his moral principles were loose, as he associated with those whom the self-righteous Pharisees regarded as being but little better than heathen. The meaning is, God has tried every plan consistent with a due regard to his own glory and your free agency to bring you to repentance ; but ye will neither be convinced by the bold, searching truths of the intrepid John, nor won by the mild remon-

MATTHEW xi. 20-24.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

21 Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida!

stances and affectionate appeals of the compassionate Jesus.

Verse 35. *But Wisdom is justified of all her children*] Wisdom is here personified, her motives and conduct scrutinized, and she acquitted from blame, or, in other words, justified. By "her children" we may understand, primarily, Christ and John; and secondly, all who receive and hold the truth of Christ's doctrine. Viewed in this light, the sense would be, that the heavenly wisdom or doctrine which both John and Christ had taught had been illustrated, honoured, and raised above all censure.—*Watson*. To us the sense appears to be, that though the methods adopted by infinite Wisdom to bring you Pharisees to repentance and ultimate salvation are rejected by you, yet are those methods approved by all who have any pretensions to being the children of God.

MATTHEW xi. 20-24.

Verse 20. *Then began he to upbraid*] "To upbraid" properly signifies to *reproach*; if that be its import here, however, we think that Christ upbraided these cities "more in sorrow than in anger."

Verse 21. *Wo unto thee*] The original is rather an exclamation of pity than a curse, being equivalent to, *Alas for thee!* It thus imports a compassionate declaration of the misery the inhabitants were bringing on

for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

themselves. *Chorazin—Bethsaida*] It is not known precisely where these places were situated; but as Christ joins them in the same censure, it is likely that they were near each other. From the information we do possess, however, we suppose Bethsaida to have stood on the eastern side of the Jordan, near the entrance of that river into the sea of Galilee; and that Chorazin was on the opposite side, near the head of the lake. *For if the mighty works*] The numerous and astonishing miracles. *Tyre and Sidon*] These were two Phenician cities, standing on the shore of the Mediterranean, the former ninety, and the latter a hundred and ten miles north of Jerusalem. They were both included within the limits of the promised land, and assigned to the tribe of Asher, but were never conquered by the Israelites.

SIDON was the more ancient city of the two, being generally supposed to have been founded by Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan the grandson of Noah. The Sidonians acquired an early pre-eminence in the arts and manufactures, and, if not the first navigators, were the first who ventured beyond their own coasts, and in those early ages engrossed the greatest part of the commerce of the world. They are also said to have been the first manufacturers of glass, and their skill in working timber was unequalled, so that Sidonian workmen were employed by Solomon to prepare the wood for the temple. The people of Sidon for a long period maintained their independence, but were at length subdued, and became successively subject to the Babylonians,

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Egyptians, Seleucidæ, and Romans, the latter of whom deprived them of their freedom. Many of the inhabitants of Sidon became followers of Christ, (Mark iii. 8.) and there was a Christian church there when Paul visited it on his way to Rome. Acts xxvii. 3. In the year 1289 the Saracens destroyed both it and Tyre, that they might no longer afford shelter to the crusaders. Since then, however, it has somewhat revived, and is now a walled town. The estimated number of inhabitants varies from eight to fifteen thousand. Its present name is *Saïde*.

TYRE is called by Isaiah (xxiii. 12) the daughter of Sidon, having been founded by a colony from thence, but at what period is uncertain. The city must have been very ancient, for in the time of Joshua it was known as "the strong city Tyre," Josh. xix. 29. There were, however, two Tyres, the one built on a small rocky island of about two miles in circumference, which was situated about half a mile from the main land, and the other on the opposite shore. Insular Tyre is supposed to be the "strong Tyre" mentioned by Joshua, the name signifying *a rock*. But at whatever period Tyre was founded, it soon attained such an eminence in mechanical skill and mercantile prosperity as entirely to eclipse its parent city Sidon. The purple dye of Tyre was celebrated all over the world, and the extent of her commerce, and "the multitude of the wares of her making," are described at length by the prophet Ezekiel. Ezek. xxvii. Her enterprising inhabitants pushed their commercial dealings to the extremities of the known world, and raised their city to a rank in power and

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty

opulence before unknown. No city, before or since, has centred within itself, as Tyre did, the trade of all nations, and held an absolute monopoly, not only of one, but of every branch of commerce. For a long period not a single production of the east passed to the west, or of the west to the east, but by the merchants of Tyre; nor for many ages were any ships but those of Tyre daring enough to pass the straits of the Red sea on one side, or of the Mediterranean on the other. No wonder, then, that "her merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth." Such was continental Tyre when Ezekiel (xxvi.) prophesied the utter desolation of that mighty city. Literally and fearfully was the prediction accomplished. Nebuchadnezzar, as foretold by the prophet, came up against it, and, after a siege of thirteen years, took and utterly destroyed it. Some idea of its extent may be formed from the fact, mentioned by Pliny and Strabo, that many centuries after, its scattered ruins covered a space of ground nineteen miles in circumference. It was never rebuilt, but many of the inhabitants went over to the insular town, which rose to great power and opulence until it was taken, after a siege of six months, by Alexander, who obtained access to it by making a causeway, two hundred feet in width, from the main land to the island. This he effected by collecting and throwing into the sea the ruins of the continental city, thus completely fulfilling the prediction respecting it. Ezek. xxvi. 12. From this period the prosperity of Tyre gradually declined, until, as before stated, it was destroyed by the Saracens in 1289. When visited by Shaw and Bruce it contained

works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

only a small number of miserable dwellings, inhabited by a few poor fishermen. Within the last few years, however, it appears to have revived a little, and late travellers describe it as containing from two to seven thousand inhabitants, of whom sixteen hundred are said to be Christians.

They would have repented long ago] The word translated "long ago" implies *in old time*, or formerly, and seems to refer to the time of Ezekiel. Our Lord intimates that if Ezekiel had done as many miracles in Tyre and Sidon as himself had done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, the inhabitants would have repented with the deepest and most genuine sorrow. Whether this repentance would have been one produced by concern for their spiritual interests or by terror at the prospect of temporal judgments, is not stated. The repentance of the Ninevites was obviously of the latter kind; yet God had respect to it as an acknowledgment of him, in the same manner as he accepted the public and deep humiliation of Ahab, which also was excited by a threatened punishment. But although Tyre and Sidon had not equal advantages with the cities here rebuked by Christ, they had sufficient warnings, instructions, and mercies, to leave them without excuse, and were therefore justly punished. *Sackcloth*] Haircloth; the putting on of which, and sprinkling ashes on the head, were customary signs of penitence and sorrow among the orientals.

Verse 22. *It shall be more tolerable, &c.*] A less punishment will be inflicted on the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than on you.

21 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Verse 23. *And thou, Capernaum*] The exact location of Capernaum is unknown. Geographers and travelers, however, uniformly place it on or near the sea of Galilee, and generally on its north-western shore. Some, however, suppose it to have stood only about eight miles north of Tiberias. When Dr. Richardson was near the village of Mensura, about six miles west of the lake, [of Gennesareth,] he asked some natives if they knew such a place as Capernaum. They answered, "Cavernahum va Chorasi—they are quite near, but in ruins." This is an important circumstance, from their joining Chorazin, which the doctor had *not* named, with Capernaum.—*Pictorial Bible. Which art exalted unto heaven*] To "exalt" is to *lift up*, to *elevate*; a metaphor expressive of the utmost prosperity, and the enjoyment of the greatest privileges. This was properly spoken of this city, because in it our Lord dwelt, and probably mixed more frequently and familiarly with the people than with the inhabitants of other places. *Shall be brought down to hell*] To *hades*, or the *grave*, not *gehenna*, the place of future punishment. As the expression "lifted up to heaven" must necessarily be understood figuratively, so its being "brought down to hell" signifies the greatness of the judgments which should fall on it. And so complete has been the desolation which has come on this, and its associated cities, that even the place where they stood is not positively known. *If the works—had been done in Sodom*] This was one of the four cities of the plain which were destroyed by fire from God out of heaven, for their

LESSON XI.

Christ invites all to come to Him—He forgives the Sins of a Female Penitent—He preaches again through Galilee.

MATTHEW xi. 25–30.

AT that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou

wickedness. It stood on what is now a part of the Dead sea, hence sometimes called the sea of Sodom. The doctrine set forth in this verse seems to be, that as the destruction of Sodom was more awful than was that of Tyre and Sidon, by so much more should the punishment of the inhabitants of Capernaum at the judgment exceed that of the people of Bethsaida and Chorazin.

Our Saviour says, that if Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, had enjoyed the privileges of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, they would have repented and been spared. We are thus taught that the promises and threatenings of God are conditional, and may be forfeited or averted by a change of conduct and disposition in ourselves.

NOTES ON MATT. xi. 25–30.

Verse 25. *At that time*] From which it appears that this lesson stands in immediate connection with the close of the preceding one. *Jesus answered and said*] This phraseology is often used even when nothing has preceded which demanded an answer: it seems here to

hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

have reference to the case of the cities of which he had spoken. *I thank thee, O Father*] I acknowledge and adore the justice and mercy of thy dispensation. *Because thou hast hid these things*] Or, as several critics say the passage should be translated, Because, *having* hidden these things. The things here referred to are the truths of the gospel, which, because they were not evident to the self-righteous, (here termed the "wise and prudent," being such in their own estimation,) are represented as being "hidden" from them by God, by a common mode of speech, attributing to him the doing of that which he merely permits to be done, and which he foresees *will* be done by his creatures, though their wills are held under no constraint. *From the wise and prudent*] Men puffed up with a sense of their own knowledge and consequence, as were the Pharisees, at whom these words seem to be levelled. *And hast revealed them unto babes*] "Babes," in Scripture language, are persons whose faculties are not improved by learning, but who, to that understanding which is purely natural, unite such qualifications as teachableness, humility, docility, &c. Such were our Lord's disciples. "Babes," therefore, stand in opposition, not to men of sound judgment and reason, but to self-conceited men, who are so full of themselves that they disdain to receive instruction from others. In this view, the "excellency of the power" would most manifestly be of God, inasmuch as the "weak things of the world" were made to confound "the things that were mighty."

Verse 26. *Even so, Father*] An emphatical reiteration

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither

of Jesus' full acquiescence in the Father's pleasure. Christ does not thank the Father that the gospel was hidden from the self-sufficient Pharisees, but that, being hidden from them by their rejection of Christ, God had graciously revealed its truths and consolations to humble and sincere inquirers. *For so it seemed good in thy sight*] The decisions of the divine Mind are ever founded upon reasons of the highest wisdom and goodness. The *wisdom* of the appointment, in *this* case, appears from the character of the agents chosen, whose want of human learning made the divine teaching more conspicuous; its *goodness* is equally apparent, because whatever most accredits Christianity as of divine origin, most increases its influence, and consequently its blessed effects.

Verse 27. *All things*] The things here referred to are all matters relating to the redemption of mankind. *Are delivered unto me of my Father*] Or, *are communicated to, or taught me*, as the same word is rendered Mark vii. 13. The instructions which Jesus Christ gave are to be regarded as being equally the decisions or teachings of God the Father and of God the Son: the same truth is declared in many other passages. John iii. 35; v. 18, 22, 23; xvii. 7, 8. Yet Christ received not his doctrine as a mere man might receive wisdom from God, by inspiration: this supposition he excludes by the important and mysterious words which follow. *No man*] Or rather, *no one*, man or angel. *Knoweth the Son, save the Father*] Luke says, "knoweth who the Son is." There is a mystery and dignity in the character and work of Christ, which can never be understood except by revelation from God. The nature, extent, import-

knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

28 Come unto me, all *ye* that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

ance, and effects of Christ's mission, are known by God, and him only. The original imports a knowledge peculiarly intimate and accurate, full and perfect. *Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son*] In the extent of his love and benevolence to man. Doubtless, the greatness of the love of God, which led to the incarnation of Christ, and all his wonderful works and sufferings for our salvation, was known only by the Father and the Son; and when that love began to manifest itself in the incarnation of the Son of God, the holy angels may well be supposed to have desired to be instructed in the mystery of human redemption. *And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*] This revelation is given in the gospel, which contains a full and moving exhibition of divine compassion, and offers to the guilty and wretched world a sure deliverance from all its misery.

Verse 28. *Come unto me*] Having, in the preceding verse, exhibited a ground for confidence in him, from the dignity of his nature and the greatness of his love, Jesus here gives an invitation—for the original implies not so much a command as a request, an earnest entreaty, for all to resort to him. To “come” to Christ is to apply to him in faith and prayer for such blessings as we see we want. *All ye that labour*] Or, *are weary*, as the original may be rendered, and which agrees better with the context. *And are heavy laden*] The figure seems to be taken from a man laden with a burden beyond his strength. Applied to the Jews it may import the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual, made more

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me : for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

burdensome by the traditions of the elders and the injunctions of the scribes and Pharisees, who, according to Christ's own declaration, were in the habit of "lading men with burdens grievous to be borne." We need not confine its interpretation, however, to the ceremonial law, for doubtless it has equal, if not more direct, reference to those who are burdened with a sense of *guilt* through *sin*. In this latter sense it may include the whole race of mankind, inasmuch as "all have sinned." *And I will give you rest*] But what is the nature of the "rest" which Christ here promises? It is, 1st. Freedom from the wearisome rites of the Mosaic ritual; 2d. From the guilt and dominion of sin, and by consequence from the accusations of conscience and the fear of God's wrath; 3d. From the pollution and inbeing of sin; 4th. A glorified "rest" in heaven.

Verse 29. *Take my yoke upon you*] The "yoke" is the curved piece of wood put upon the necks of oxen when used as draught animals, and is an emblem of servitude. The taking on us Christ's yoke implies submission to his authority, and a ready subjection to his doctrines and precepts. *And learn of me*] Be instructed by me, as scholars are instructed by their teacher. We are to learn of Christ all things pertaining to our duty to God and man. *For I am meek and lowly*] "Meek" here means *gentle, unassuming*, and "lowly" *condescending*. There seems to be here rather a recommendation of himself to their choice as their teacher, on account of his gentleness and condescension, (which is opposed to the arrogance and superciliousness of the

LUKE vii. 36-50.

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

haughty scribes and Pharisees,) than a recommendation of these qualities in him to their imitation. The sense seems to be, Be instructed by me, whom ye will find a meek and condescending teacher; not rough, haughty, and impatient. *And ye shall find rest unto your souls*] Christianity, when possessed in its life and power, gives rest to the soul, because, 1st. It clearly informs the judgment concerning the most important points, removing all doubts respecting them; 2d. It settles the will in the choice of what is for its happiness; 3d. It controls and regulates the passions, and brings into the soul the peace and love of God. This "rest" is imparted at the time of justification, and increases in proportion to the faithfulness and devotion of the individual.

Verse 30. *For my yoke is easy*] Agreeable. *And my burden is light*] Or *pleasant*, as the original word also signifies. The pleasures which Christ promises are those of goodness, the most extensive, satisfying, and durable of all pleasures, being to the mind a delicious and continual feast. The same cannot be truly said of any other religion which has ever existed among men.

LUKE vii. 36-50.

Verse 36. *One of the Pharisees desired him* (Jesus) *that he would eat with him, &c.*] The sacred historian has not given us any account of the circumstances under

37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment,

which this invitation was given and accepted, or of the place where *Jesus* was at the time. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the invitation was extended in consequence of Christ's remark that he came "eating and drinking," &c., (verse 34,) that is, that he, unlike John the Baptist, mixed freely with society; and from other passages in the narrative we infer that many other persons were invited at the same time, though from what motives we cannot determine. The place was probably Nain, or its neighbourhood, as we have no account of Christ's having yet left that city since the raising of the widow's son. *And he went, and sat down to meat*] Or rather *reclined*. Christ's example in accepting this invitation teaches us neither absolutely to refuse all favours, nor resent all neglects, from those whose friendship is at least doubtful.

Verse 37. *And behold, a woman which was a sinner*] This is not the same transaction as that recorded Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3; John xii. 2, as must appear to all who read the two accounts with attention. There is considerable diversity of opinion among commentators as to the character of the woman mentioned here: some regarding her as a very wicked woman, while others think her to have been a heathen. However, let her former character have been what it might, she was now evidently penitent, if not pardoned. It is suggested by Lightfoot that this woman was probably induced to come thus to Christ by the gracious invitation recorded in the former part of this lesson, "Come unto me, ye

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them*

that labour, and are heavy laden," &c. *When she knew that Jesus sat in the Pharisee's house*] Having, probably, heard from the report of others whither he had gone. *Brought an alabaster box of ointment*] Alabaster is a white stone used [chiefly] for ornamental purposes. There are two kinds, one of which is the *carbonate*, the other the *sulphate*, of lime. This last, when pure, is a beautiful semi-transparent snow-white substance, and, from its softness, is easily worked. The name is derived from Alabastron, a town of Egypt.—*Penny Cyclopaedia*.

Verse 38. *And stood at his feet behind him*] The Jews of our Saviour's time reclined at meals, according to the custom of the Persians, from whom the Greeks and Romans seem to have taken it, and the Jews, probably, from them. The table usually formed three sides of a square, being open at one end for the admission of servants, and their convenience in waiting on the table. Around the table were placed cushions or mattresses, laid on a raised framework, so as to bring them nearly on a level with the table. Between these divans or cushions and the wall of the apartment a passage-way was left sufficiently wide to admit persons to pass readily. The guests usually reclined on the left elbow, their backs or shoulders being supported by a small pillow or bolster, and their bodies extended obliquely across the couch, excepting that the knees were usually bent a little, and the feet drawn up under their long garments. When the woman washed Christ's feet, however, they must have protruded from under his clothes. The food was conveyed to the mouth by the right hand. It is easy

with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

to perceive from this arrangement how the woman "stood at his feet behind." The Jews wore no stock-



ings, and they generally put off their sandals or shoes on entering a house; but, if this custom should have been then neglected, it was always attended to before meals. *And began to wash (or water) his feet with tears]* It probably was not her intention thus to wash

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, 'This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

the Saviour's feet, but, being affected with his present, or the recollection of his former, conversation, she wept, and the tears trickled down on his feet, observing which, she wiped them with the hair of her head, which she might now have worn loosely, as mourners commonly did. Bloomfield, however, says, that bathing the feet with tears denoted earnest supplication. *Kissed his feet*] Dr. A. Clarke says that kissing the feet was not a Jewish practice, and adduces this in support of his opinion that the woman was a heathen. It symbolized the profoundest veneration and respect.

Verse 39. *Now when the Pharisee—saw it*] When Simon noticed this conduct of the woman. *He spake within himself*] He reasoned in his own mind; he thought, but said nothing. *This man, if he were a prophet*] As he pretends to be. Simon seems to have entertained the commonly received notion that a true prophet would know exactly the real character of all who approached him, and that as a man of God he would have no intercourse with wicked persons, seeing that it was a maxim with the Pharisees that the very touch of the wicked caused pollution. *Would have known what manner of woman this is*] And knowing this, would have repulsed her, *for she was a sinner*. The Pharisee judged by his own prejudices, but, blessed be God, Christ came to call sinners from the error of their way, and receives them still. Jesus, however, gave a convincing proof that he was a prophet, "and

40 And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty:

42 And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Verily I say unto thee, Whosoever he is, that thus loveth, his father will love him, and he will love his brethren which he loveth. Verily I say unto thee, Whosoever he is, that thus loveth, his father will love him, and he will love his brethren which he loveth. Verily I say unto thee, Whosoever he is, that thus loveth, his father will love him, and he will love his brethren which he loveth.

Verse 40. *And Jesus, answering*] Replying to the undivulged question of Simon's mind. *Said, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee*] Though our Lord was now partaking of the hospitality of Simon's house, he judged it proper to reprove him, though in the kindest manner, for what he saw amiss in him. Herein we are taught not to withhold mild, affectionate reproof when it is needed, for such rebuke is "better than secret love." *And he (Simon) said, Master*] That is, teacher; he preserves the show of respect, even though he had wronged Jesus in his heart.

VERSES 41, 42. *A certain creditor had two debtors*] "Creditor" means one to whom money is *due*; "debtor" is he who *owes*. *Five hundred pence, &c.*] A denarius (the Roman penny) is worth about fifteen cents of our currency. Doubtless, the two debtors represent the woman and Simon; she, the greater debtor, he, the less. *And when they had nothing to pay*] In one respect they are alike, neither of them being able to pay any part of his debt. Herein these debtors are fair representatives of the whole race of man, who, though some are "sinners beyond others," are all debtors to God's justice, and have nothing wherewith to satisfy his demands. But (if we may make free to use such a figure) the great Creditor offers to each debtor,

gave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed

as a gratuity, a sum wherewith he may discharge his debt—namely, the atonement of Christ, by faith in which we may be saved from the punishment of our sins, which are what is here likened to a debt. See note on Matt. v. 12. *Tell me, which will love most*] Until forgiven, neither will love, for the love is consequent on forgiveness.

Verse 43. *Simon answered, He to whom he forgave most*] The inference is natural, all other things being equal. We would here remind the reader of the fact, that both were brought under obligations to love their creditor from a sense of benefits received, and though the one had more forgiven him than had the other, yet he who had least forgiven was equally insolvent, and, therefore, so far as the *nature* of the obligation was concerned, was equally bound to gratitude with the other. Friend, how is it with *thee*? it may be thou hast had much forgiven, dost *thou love* much?

Verse 44. *Seest thou this woman?*] This despised person? she has paid me more attention than thou hast done, though I came into thy house as thy invited guest. It does not appear that Simon's neglect of the customary civilities of a host was designed, still the Saviour mildly reproves him for not performing them. *Thou gavest me no water for my feet*] In Palestine, as well as among the orientals generally, the rites of hospitality were ac-

my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

counted sacred, and were cheerfully rendered to all who claimed them. Among the most customary attentions was, the furnishing of water for the washing of the traveller's feet, (Gen. xliii. 24; 1 Tim. v. 10,) which, as sandals were generally worn, and the feet rendered uncomfortable by exposure to heat and dust, was most refreshing. Generally, the washing was done by servants, but sometimes the master of the house performed this act.

Verse 45. *Thou gavest me no kiss*] A kiss, with the oriental nations, forms part of the common and regular salutation of friends.—*Kopp*. From the conduct of Absalom, (2 Samuel xv. 5,) and of Judas, (Matt. xxvi. 48,) we may infer this token of affection to have been in common use among the Jews. *This woman, since I came in*] Many critics say this should read, *This woman, since she came in, &c.*, because Christ entered some time before her, as appears from verse 37. *Hath not ceased to kiss my feet*] See note on verse 38.

Verse 46. *My head with oil thou didst not anoint*] The meaning of to "anoint" is *to wash, to pour out upon, to consecrate*. The anointing here spoken of is the pouring oil on the head, which was a customary mark of respect and welcome among the Jews. Matt. vi. 17. Sometimes, olive oil, merely, was used, at other times, this oil was mixed with a number of odoriferous drugs, forming a rich unguent and pleasant perfume. *This woman hath anointed my feet with ointment*] Perhaps the Saviour here calls attention not only to the *act* of

47 Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

the woman, but to the *quality* of the material used: thou didst not even offer me the common civility of dressing my head with simple oil, but she has bathed my feet with the *richest ointment*. From Prov. xxvii.⁹ we infer that these ointments were refreshing to the body, and exhilarating to the spirits, as well as gratifying evidences of cordiality and welcome. This custom still prevails in the east, excepting that sometimes rose water and other scents are sprinkled over the person instead of oil, and that dry perfumes are burned on a dish, the fumes of which are inhaled by the visiter, and are said to be extremely delicious. The ceremony is observed at taking leave.

Verse 47. *Wherefore*] Inasmuch as she has given this manifestation of her love. *I say unto thee*] I now openly declare unto thee, both for her vindication and thy admonition; for Simon had deemed her a wicked woman. *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven*] Whether she was pardoned at this, or at some former time, does not clearly appear. *For she loved much*] Wesley, Clarke, Benson, and some other commentators, say the word translated *for* should be rendered *therefore*; otherwise the woman's love would be made the *reason* or *ground* of her forgiveness, which is contrary to the sense of the passage, and to the Saviour's express declaration in verse 50. We rather think the words, "for she loved much," &c., are added by the evangelist as explanatory, and make no part of the conversation between Christ and Simon. If this view be correct, the passage should be read in parentheses.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Verse 48. *And he said unto her*] Now, for the first time, addressing the woman personally. *Thy sins are forgiven*] What a comforting assurance to the weeping penitent! This is a formal announcement to the woman of that forgiveness which Christ had already informed Simon the Pharisee had been granted her.

Verse 49. *And they that sat at meat with him*] From which it appears that Jesus was not the only guest. *Began to say within themselves*] That is, to inquire of their own minds, to think; though Guyse understands the expression to mean, "inquired among themselves," or, one of another. *Who is this that forgiveth sins also?*] Which is the prerogative of God alone. Mark ii. 7. Well, therefore, might they be astonished. And who could he be but God? Reader, remember it is still his pleasure to forgive sins; art *thou* pardoned?

Verse 50. *He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee*] Her FAITH, not her love. "Faith" is a full reliance, an implicit trust, in the promises of God. She was thus delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, and holy principles implanted in her heart. *Go in peace*] Though peace of conscience be the inseparable consequence of the pardon of sin, the term seems to be here used rather as a farewell: "go in peace" being a usual formula of dismissing inferiors with friendship and good wishes.

"Both this transaction, and the parable to which it gave rise, are of great theological importance. The doctrine of the parable is, that pardon of sin is wholly gratuitous,

LUKE viii. 1-3.

1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him,

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

independent of any consideration of worthiness or ability in the sinner. When the debtors had nothing to pay, the creditor *frankly forgave them both*, wholly remitted their debt and cancelled their obligation. Answering to the doctrine of the parable is the example: a woman who was a *sinner*, being a penitent, and having faith in Christ, is freely forgiven. Free and full salvation through the sole mercy of God in Christ, and by faith in his merit, is the glorious doctrine of the New Testament, nor can it lead to any abuse, rightly understood: for he that hath much forgiven will *love much*; and to him that loveth, 'the commandments of God are not grievous.'—*Watson*.

LUKE viii. 1-3.

Verse 1. *And he (Jesus) went through every city and village*] That is, of Galilee. *Preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God*] That it was come unto them. By "kingdom of God," the gospel dispensation is intended. *And the twelve were with him*] The twelve apostles.

Verse 2. *And Mary, called Magdalene*] From Magdala, the place of her former residence, which was a town in Galilee, on the western shore of the lake of Gennesareth, and about midway between Capernaum

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

and Tiberias. To the neighbourhood of this city Jesus retired after feeding the four thousand. Matt. xv. 39. She is supposed to have been a person of opulence and extensive influence, as she is commonly first named among the women who waited on Christ. *Out of whom went seven devils*] Being cast out by Christ. Mark xvi. 9. This possession was doubtless her misfortune, not her fault. An opinion has prevailed very extensively (we presume the world is indebted for it to the Romish Church) that Mary of Magdala was a courtesan; hence reclaimed women of this character are frequently called Magdalenes, and houses designed for their accommodation, Magdalene hospitals, &c. The appellation is an unfounded reproach on the character of (for aught we know to the contrary) a worthy woman.

Verse 3. *And Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward*] Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. By "steward" we understand the person having the oversight of Herod's domestic affairs. *Which ministered*] Imparted to Christ. *Of their substance*] The early Christians lived out of one common stock. It was customary for men who devoted themselves to the instructions of the people to accept the services of pious females, without any scandal.

LESSON XII.

Christ cures a Demoniac—Conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees.—MATTHEW xii. 22-45; MARK iii. 19-30; LUKE xi. 14-36.

MARK iii. 19-30.

19 — And they went into a house.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

NOTES ON MARK iii. 19-30; MATT. xii. 22-32.

Verse 19. *And they*] Christ and his immediate followers. *Went into a house*] Probably Peter's, at Capernaum.

Verse 20. *The multitude cometh together*] The people assembled in crowds about the house as soon as it was known that Christ was in the place. *So that they*] Jesus and his disciples. *Could not so much as eat bread*] Had not even time to take necessary refreshment.

Verse 21. *And when his friends*] Stated, verse 31, to be his mother and his brethren. *Heard of it*] Heard that the people so pressed on him, and that he neglected the precautions necessary to his own health, through his earnest desire to instruct them. *They went out to lay hold on him*] The original does not necessarily imply force; they probably hoped, by appealing to his judgment, to constrain him to spare himself such excessive labours. From a comparison of this passage with John vii. 5, we shall perceive that some of his own brethren did not, as yet, believe on him. *For they said, He is*

22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

beside himself] To be "beside oneself" is to be deranged, which they seem to have supposed was the case with Jesus from his neglecting his own comfort. It is not impossible, however, that the expression should be taken as importing, merely, that he was greatly excited, as he might well be, by witnessing the eagerness of the people. Some commentators think the obnoxious expression to have been uttered by Christ's enemies, and not by his relatives.

The plan of the Questions, followed in these Notes, makes it necessary here to introduce the circumstance recorded Matthew xii. 22, 23. *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb*] This man's friends probably regarded these infirmities as the effect of natural disease; the Holy Spirit informs us of their true origin—Satanic influence. *And he healed him*] By casting out the demon. Christ was "manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil," both in the bodies and souls of men. *And all the people were amazed*] At this exhibition of goodness and power. *And said, Is not this the son of David?*] By this expression the Jews meant the Messiah. John vii. 42.

Verse 22. *And the scribes*] Matthew says, *Pharisees*, probably there were both. *Which came from Jerusalem*] The scribes and Pharisees were, with but few exceptions, the inveterate opponents of the Saviour; and those of Jerusalem seem to have been animated by even a stronger resentment than those of their sect and profession who belonged to other places. We have seen it suggested that some of these men were engaged con-

23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

stantly to watch Christ's motions and to counteract his influence. *He hath Beelzebub*] This calumny they seem to have uttered on hearing the people declare their opinion that Jesus was "the son of David," as above noticed. "Beelzebub," or rather, Baalzebub, was the idol worshipped by the Philistines of Ekron. His name means the *lord of flies*, and it is probable that the people who worshipped him were foolish enough to think he could protect them from the swarms of troublesome flies which are supposed to have infested their country at certain seasons. *And by the prince*] Or *chief*. *Of devils casteth he out devils*] What deep malignity is here! The miracle they could not contradict—it was apparent to all; but, in order to do away the favourable impression made on the people, they declare Christ to be in league with Satan, and that the miracle was effected by the connivance of the evil one.

Verse 23. *He called them unto him*] To expose to them the fallacy of their argument, and warn them of the danger of indulging such sentiments. *And said unto them in parables*] A "parable" is a *comparison*, a *figurative speech*, a *riddle*.

Verse 24. *If a kingdom be divided against itself, &c.*] As a kingdom divided against itself, where one part seeks the destruction of another, cannot "stand," that is, cannot *continue*, for its internal divisions will produce its ruin, so, if one devil counteract another in his designs and acts of mischief, the kingdom of Satan is divided, its order and subordination subverted, and its fall

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

made certain. We believe that an eminent poet has no less truly than strongly said,

“Devil with devil damn’d firm concord holds,”

in opposition to God and goodness.

According to Matthew Jesus used another irresistible argument in this discussion:—*If I by Beelzebub cast out devils*] As ye say I do. *By whom do your children cast them out?*] By “children,” here, we understand the disciples of the Pharisees, to whom this conversation was addressed. For a similar case see 1 Kings xx. 35. Both before and after the time of Christ the Jewish exorcists cast out, or attempted to cast out, devils by the “authority of the great and fearful name.” Whether or not, in some cases, God interposed, and gave effect to their attempts, we cannot say; the argument is, however, equally strong on either supposition. They never attempted to cast out Satan by Satan, but by the name and power of the true God. Either, therefore, the Pharisees must confess that their disciples [and themselves by inference, as being their instructors] were in league with Satan, or they could not sustain the absurd charge against Christ. *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God*] By divine co-operation; Luke says, “by the finger of God.” *Then the kingdom of God is come unto you*] The original is said to import “is come on you before you are aware.” The argument is: “If I cast out demons by *divine* power, I perform miracles by the *aid* of God; hence it follows, that I am *sent* from God. But if I be sent from God, you should believe me when I announce to you the kingdom of God.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

28 Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven

We must here introduce Luke xi. 21-23. *When a strong man armed*] Meaning Satan. *Keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace*] Or safety, unless a stronger than he attack him. *But when a stronger shall come upon him, &c.*] Assail and beat him. *He taketh from him his armour*] Armour is a defence for the whole or certain parts of the body. It usually consisted of brass, iron, or steel. *And divideth his spoils*] Such was former usage. This passage was designed to show, 1st. Not only that Christ was stronger than Satan, but that he was hostile to him, instead of being leagued with him, as the Pharisees had insinuated; and 2d. That he exerted his power to indicate the spiritual conquests he was to attain over the dominion of Satan in the hearts of men. The ejection of devils was a visible sign to the Jews that the kingdom of God was come unto them; hence the guilt of the Pharisees was heightened, for they contended not only against Christ, but against all those glorious attestations of the establishment of this kingdom resulting from the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit. *He that is not with me*] Aiding in the efforts made to subvert the kingdom of the wicked one. *Is against me*] From this it appears that all persons are exerting an influence *for or against* the "kingdom of God." Reader, on which side art thou?

Verse 28. *Verily*] Truly, certainly. *All sins shall be forgiven*] Matthew says, *All manner of sin and*

unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme :

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation :

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

blasphemy. "Sin," in its *widest* signification, is any want of conformity to God's law : "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James iv. 17. In its usual acceptation, however, it is the wilful transgression of God's law. 1 John iii. 4. "Blasphemy," when affecting men, is injurious and calumnious speaking; when affecting Deity, it consists in reproachful speeches uttered against God, in denying him the possession of those attributes which he has declared to belong to himself, or in ascribing to him the imperfections of depraved man, or in attributing to man the excellences or works which are done by or appertain to God only. Yet all this may be forgiven on repentance and faith in Christ.

Verse 29. *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness*] For that particular blasphemy which, in opposition to sufficient evidence, and against reasonable conviction, persists in attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan, there is no forgiveness. The "Holy Ghost" is the third person in the adorable Trinity; and as such is most intimately united with the Father and the Son. He is distinguished from the Father and the Son, but is possessed of the same essential nature and attributes as are ascribed to the Father and the Son. *Neither in this world, neither in the world to come*] This expression does not imply that there is forgiveness for any sin after death, as some have erroneously supposed. It is simply a strong declaration

MATTHEW xii. 33-45.

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, that for this sin there is no forgiveness. The Romish doctrine of purgatory, therefore, can receive no countenance from it. See Watson on Matt. xii. 31, 32. *But is in danger of eternal damnation*] The context shows this to be equivalent to shall *receive* eternal damnation, there being no forgiveness for this sin.

MATTHEW xii. 33-45.

Verse 33. *Either make the tree good, &c.*] To “make” here must mean to *acknowledge*, for the fruit determines the character of the tree. Most commentators interpret these words as referring to Christ, as though he had said, The tree and its fruit will be alike; if the tree be bad, so will its fruit be; if it be a bad work to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, &c., then am I influenced by a bad spirit; but if these works be good, acknowledge them to be such, and that they proceed from God. Watson, however, understands the phrase to be an exhortation to the Pharisees to appear to be what they were in reality, the opponents of God, and no longer to cloak themselves under a sanctimonious garb.

Verse 34. *O generation of vipers*] The “viper” is a serpent famed, in hot countries, for its venom, which is one of the most active poisons in the animal kingdom. The full grown viper is commonly from two to three feet long, and nearly as thick as a man’s arm. The head is rather flat, the mouth wide, and generally furnished with two large teeth in each

speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

jaw, through a perforation in which the poison is injected into the wound when a bite is given. It is said by some that at the base of and behind these teeth are six or seven smaller ones, adhering by a membrane, which are supposed to be intended to supply the place of the larger ones, sometimes lost in the act of biting. "The viper is spotted with yellow and brown, and sprinkled over with blackish spots." Capt. Riley, in his Narrative, describes the colours as being the most beautiful in nature. This reptile is an emblem of malignity and mischief. Christ compares the Pharisees to this serpent, because of the malignity of their disposition, and the fatal venom of their tongues; their blasphemies being as destructive to the souls of men, as the poison of the viper is to animal life. *How can ye, being evil, speak good things?* We understand the Saviour here directly to charge them with their hypocrisy: "how can ye, being evil," *pretend* to speak good things? Then follows the reason of his charge: *for out of the abundance, or overflowing, of the heart the mouth speaketh*] That is, when the heart is so full that it can no longer restrain the passions by which it is actuated, the mouth will give utterance to them: it was by the blasphemies uttered by the Pharisees, that their true character was at this time exhibited.

Verse 35. *A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, &c.*] The heart is compared to a treasury, that is, a place of deposit; because it is accounted the

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment :

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

seat of the affections. Matt. xv. 19. The "treasures," or dispositions, &c., contained therein, are reckoned good or evil in proportion as they are pure and lovely, or vile and hateful ; and as they are, so is the man. The application of the verse to the case in hand is, "The good man, from the treasure of his kind affections, brings forth candid opinions and equitable decisions ; the wicked man has within him a store of pride, enmity, and malice, which he pours forth in slanderous and unjust language," as the Pharisees had done. In a general sense it teaches that the outward conduct will correspond with the inward disposition.

Verse 36. *Every idle word that men shall speak*] Strictly, an "idle word" is a vain, foolish, unprofitable remark : this cannot, however, be the import of the text. What is here meant are *false, slanderous, pernicious words*. Our Lord, according to his usual custom, embraces the opportunity given by the subject of declaring an important general truth—that *words*, as well as *actions*, are matters of cognizance with God, and of accountability on our part.

Verse 37. *For by thy words*] Not by words merely, but by them and actions conjoined ; for actions, as well as words, being evidence of character, their testimony is admissible. *Thou shalt be justified or condemned*] To "justify," in the sense here used, is to *acquit*, to *approve* ; to "condemn" is to *pronounce judgment against*. Although by the "idle words," reproved by

38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there

Christ, we are to understand the mischievous, malicious declaration that he worked miracles through the agency of Satan, yet we may remark that all vain, unedifying conversation, not "ministering grace to the hearer," is at least a waste of time, and therefore censurable.

Verse 38. *Master, we would see a sign from thee*] By "sign" the scribes and Pharisees meant a supernatural display of power—a miracle. From Luke xi. 16, it appears that they wished this sign to be "from heaven;" and it is therefore probable that they pretended to be unsatisfied by such attestations to the truth of Jesus' messiahship as were furnished by his healing the sick by a word or touch, restoring the dead to life, giving sight to the blind, &c.; as though it required greater power to arrest or divert the course of nature in the atmosphere than on the earth. It may be they had some reference to Daniel vii. 13. Infidels, in all ages, have demanded different evidence from that which God has been pleased to give, and generally with insincerity, as did these skeptics. He who is not convinced by proofs so clear and strong as those on which Christianity rests, is an unbeliever, not from want of evidence, but from some evil bias of his judgment and will, which no additional testimony could remedy.

Verse 39. *He answered, An adulterous generation seeketh a sign*] The Jews are here termed "adulterous" on account of their unfaithfulness to God. The relation in which this nation stood to Jehovah is frequently represented by the marriage state: and they are here

shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in

termed adulterers, on account of their infidelity, which as effectually separated them from God as did their ancient idolatry. Most commentators, however, think that the epithet is applied to the Jews on account of their frequent divorces, which, in the estimation of God, was adultery. *There shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas*] We said, verse 38, that "sign" meant miracle; in common language it might be termed a *token*, for the power to work miracles was a *token*, an *evidence*, that God was with the person working such miracle, so far as the miracle itself was concerned. The prophet Jonas, or Jonah, was a native of Gath-hepher, a town in Galilee, belonging to the tribe of Zebulon, but its exact situation is unknown. He was a contemporary with Jeroboam II., king of Israel, and, according to our common chronology, is supposed to have delivered his prophecy against Nineveh about 862 years before the coming of Christ. What this "sign" was we are told in the next verse.

Verse 40. *As Jonas was three days in the whale's belly*] This prophet, being commanded by God to go to Nineveh and proclaim the destruction which should come on it in consequence of the wickedness of the inhabitants, endeavoured to evade the duty by fleeing to Tarshish. On the voyage thither, however, a great storm arose, and on Jonah's confessing himself to be the cause of it, he was thrown overboard, and swallowed by a "great fish" (for such is the import of the original word) which God had provided for the purpose.

the whale's belly : so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with

On the third day the fish "vomited out Jonah on the dry land," when he, being penitent, went and fulfilled his mission. *So shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth*] By "heart of the earth" is meant simply beneath its surface, and is spoken of Christ's lying in the grave. The "sign," therefore, to which Christ referred his hearers, was his death, burial, and resurrection.

Verse 41. *The men of Nineveh*] The mention of Jonah seems to have brought to our Lord's mind the repentance of the Ninevites, and to have suggested the contrast between their penitence and the obduracy of the Jews. *Shall rise up in judgment with this generation*] "This," says Mr. Watson, "alludes to the custom of witnesses rising up from their seats, and standing in court to give their testimony." Not that the Ninevites shall really be their prosecutors and accusers, but that the better conduct of the Ninevites shall, on comparison, make the conduct of the Jews appear the worse. *A greater than Jonah is here*] And it was this fact that made the Jews more guilty than were the Ninevites. Men's responsibility is proportioned to their privileges and opportunities ; how much greater then is *our* responsibility than was theirs !

Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, stood on one bank of the river Tigris, but whether on its eastern or western bank is disputed. It is supposed to have been founded by Nimrod, great grandson of Noah ; (Gen. x. 8-11, margin ;) and hence Micah (v. 6) calls Assyria "the land of Nimrod." At the time Jonah was sent to announce to its inhabitants the threatened judgments

this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas *is here*.

of the Almighty, it contained "more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left hand," that is, young children, incapable of judging between right and wrong: and as children make, generally, about one fifth part of the inhabitants of cities, it is presumed that Nineveh contained above six hundred thousand persons. Diodorus Siculus, a Grecian historian who flourished about forty-four years before Christ, "represents the city as oblong, and about sixty English miles in circumference. But we must not suppose that all this space was covered with compact streets and buildings; it took in a considerable space of country—probably all the cultivated ground necessary to support all the inhabitants of that district."—*Clarke*. Its walls are stated to have been one hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots could be driven abreast on them. The towers, of which there were fifteen hundred, were each of them two hundred feet high. The prophecy of Nahum relates almost entirely to the threatened destruction of this city and of the empire whose metropolis it was. Zephaniah, also, (ii. 13–15,) predicts its utter desolation. Nineveh, which had long been mistress of the East, was first taken by Arbaces and Belesis, under the reign of Sardanapalus, about A. M. 3257; it recovered its former power, however, under Sennacherib and his son Esarhaddon, and continued its dominion about 120 years longer, when Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, to whom had been committed the government of Chaldea, and Cyaxares, supposed to have been the

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came

Ahasuerus of Scripture, united their forces against Nineveh, took the city, and terminated the monarchy of the Assyrians. With this event the prophecies of Jonah, Zephaniah, and Nahum, were fulfilled. Nineveh, according to the sure word of prophecy, has become so complete a "desolation" that its location is not certainly known, the "Lord having made an utter end of it." For a more particular account of the predictions against Nineveh, with the evidences of their fulfilment, the reader is referred to Newton or Keith on the Prophecies.

Luke (xi. 30) says that Jonah was a "sign" to the Ninevites. It is supposed that the miraculous preservation and deliverance of Jonah became known to the Ninevites, and was to them an evidence or "sign" that God had spoken to them by him; and that in like manner the resurrection of Christ should show to the Jews the truth of *his* mission.

Verse 42. *The queen of the south, &c.*] Called, 1 Kings x. 1, the queen of Sheba. Sheba is placed by some in Arabia; by others in Ethiopia: and the traditions of both countries claim this woman for their sovereign. Both kingdoms lie south or south-east of Judea, hence she is called "queen of the south," that is, of the south country. *Came from the uttermost parts of the earth*] Some commentators understand by this that her country was bounded on one or more sides by the sea; but others, probably with more reason, think the expression merely denotes a remote country. For similar use of language see Deut. xxviii. 49. *To hear the wisdom of Solomon*] She is here commended by our Lord for her love of wisdom and the efforts she made to gain

from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

it, having performed a long journey that she might hear the wisdom of Solomon; and her example condemned the Jews, for they would not hear one who was much wiser than Solomon, [meaning himself,] though he were come to their very doors.

The following illustration, founded on the fact of demoniacal possession, is thought by some to be used by Christ as an illustration of the uselessness of yielding to the request of the scribes and Pharisees, "to show them a sign from heaven." It seems to us, however, that the condition of the man in the parable, when the devil was dispossessed for a time, refers to that hopeful state of mind to which great multitudes of the Jews had been brought by the preaching of John the Baptist and the early ministrations of our Lord: and that their opposition to the lowly appearance of Jesus, and their consequent rejection of him as Messiah, would again subject them to the power of these infernal enemies, and that they would thus become as much more obdurate, wicked, and miserable, as was the man who had been dispossessed, when the ejected spirit, with others more wicked than he, entered his heart, and again took up his abode there.

Verse 43. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man*] That is, when he is turned out, for he will never go out of his own accord. *He walketh through dry places*] Barren and desolate spots, wildernesses. The Saviour speaks in conformity with a very prevalent no-

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

tion that evil spirits had their haunts in such places. Similar allusions are contained in other parts of the sacred writings. Isa. xiii. 21; Rev. xviii. 2. *Seeking rest, and findeth none*] From this we learn that these spirits are wretched, and that they take pleasure in doing evil.

Verses 44, 45. *I will return into my house*] By "house" is meant the soul of the person from whom he had been expelled. The solitudes in which he had since wandered afforded no opportunities for tempting men, and left the wandering, wretched spirit wholly to his own tormenting thoughts; he therefore is described as hastening back to the habitations of human society, in quest of subjects on whom to exercise his malignant power. *And when he is come, he findeth it empty*] That is, uninhabited. We presume that this figure cannot be explained in strict conformity to fact, for we know not that the heart is ever empty; being always occupied with good or evil desires—the residence of God or Satan. *Swept and garnished*] "Garnished" probably means furnished, like to a house fitted for the reception of inmates. *Then goeth he, and taketh seven other spirits*] Many others, seven being put for an indefinite number, as we sometimes say a dozen or a score, when there may be more or less. See a similar form of speech, Psa. xci. 7. *More wicked than himself*] From which it appears that there are degrees of wickedness, even among devils. *And they enter in and dwell there*] The narrative indicates that though possession

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

might in some cases be the misfortune rather than the fault of the individual suffering therefrom, yet that *re-possession* was occasioned by a relapse into sin, which grieved the Holy Spirit, (by whose influence the demon had been cast out,) and obliged him to depart. *The last state of that man is worse than the first*] He becomes more wicked and hardened than he was before the demon was cast out, because Satan has obtained sevenfold dominion over him. Let us beware of resisting impressions of divine truth, and of apostatizing from God, for to what an awful state of misery we may bring ourselves by so doing, we cannot conceive. *Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation*] "And so it was; for they became worse and worse, as if totally abandoned to diabolical influence, till the besom of destruction swept them away." The parable was applied to the Jews, because their condition resembled that of the man, and it was designed to teach them the danger of indulging those feelings of opposition and hatred to Jesus which many of them, the rulers in particular, seem to have indulged. It is also a solemn admonition to us, lest, through unwatchfulness, worldliness, or neglect of duty, those evils from which we have been partially saved should return with sevenfold force, and subject us to their sway. "Watch and pray," says our Lord, to his disciples, "lest ye fall into temptation."

LUKE xi. 33-36.

33 No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

35 Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

LUKE xi. 33-36.

Verse 33. *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, &c.*] See note on Matt. v. 15, page 20. Although this and the following illustration were used in the sermon on the mount, it was in a rather different sense from that in which they are here employed. In the former part of this lesson our Lord reproves those who demanded some greater "sign" than they had received, and here reminds them that he had already placed clear and decisive evidence of the truth of his mission before them; and that as "no man lights a lamp to put it in a secret place, or under a bushel, but on a lampstand, that they which come in may see the light," so he had performed his illustrious works publicly before the whole nation.

Verse 34. *The light of the body is the eye, &c.*] See note on Matt. vi. 22, 23, pages 61, 62.

Verse 35. *Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness*] By "the light within" is meant the reason, or understanding, which is the medium of perception to the soul, as the natural eye is the organ of vision to the body. If, however, the mind be under the influence of prejudice, it no longer performs its duties in a proper manner, but presents a distorted view of the images brought before it, as the diseased eye fails to con-

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light; as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea, rather blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

vey a clear sense of the objects around. The lesson affords abundant evidence of such prejudice existing in the minds of the scribes and Pharisees, in their attributing the works of power and benevolence performed by Christ to Satanic influence.

Verse 36. *If thy whole body, therefore, be full of light*] Through the soundness of thine eye. *The whole shall be full of light*] The whole man, if thy understanding be also sound or unprejudiced. The inference we draw from the passage is, that Jesus' teachings and miracles are sufficient to satisfy every candid inquirer, Jew or Gentile, that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Verse 27. *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, &c.*] Such expressions were very common among the Jews, when great admiration was felt. It means, "Blessed is the mother that bare thee."

Verse 28. *Yea, rather, blessed, &c.*] Our Lord allows the blessedness of his mother: she had been declared blessed by the Spirit of prophecy, and he confirms the declaration: but he also speaks of a superior blessedness to hers, considered merely as flowing from her having been his mother—the blessedness of hearing and keeping the word of God. What importance is thus stamped upon paying all due attention to understand

LESSON XIII.

Christ declares his disciples to be his real kindred—Parable of the Sower.—MATTHEW xii. 46-50; xiii. 10-23; MARK iii. 31-34; iv. 1-9; LUKE viii. 19-21; viii. 4-8.

MATTHEW xii. 46-50.

WHILE he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?

believe, and practise his commands! Surely, in doing so there is great reward.

NOTES ON MATT. xii. 46-50.

Verse 46. *His mother and his brethren stood without*] Outside the house where he was teaching. Mark iii. 19. It is the opinion of some that these were not *brothers* of the Saviour, but probably his cousins, who, according to the custom of the Jews, are termed "brethren," which with them signified any near relation. The reason for their "standing without" is given by Luke, (viii. 19,) who says "they could not come at him for the press." They therefore "sent word to him," (Mark iii. 31,) we suppose by the message being passed from one to another till it reached him.

Verse 48. *Who is my mother, &c.*] We must not suppose that by this expression our Lord designed to slight his relatives, especially his mother; for his whole deportment shows the contrary. His object was probably to arouse the attention of his hearers to the important and consolatory truth which follows.

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold **my** mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

MARK iv. 1-9.

1 And he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

Verses 49, 50. *Whosoever shall do the will of my father, &c.*] As if he had said, "I regard obedience to God so highly, that I prefer the relation it constitutes and the union it creates to the strongest ties of blood." Those are more properly his relations who have a *spiritual* rather than an earthly connection with him. What an honour is this! "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

MARK iv. 1-9.

Verse 1. *And Jesus began again to teach by the seaside*] By the sea of Galilee, on the border of which Capernaum was probably situated. *He entered into a ship*] Or fishing boat, owned probably by one or more of the apostles. This he did for convenience in teaching, as he could thus be seen by more, and his words be better heard, water being one of the best conductors of sound in nature. Matthew says that this was on the same day on which Jesus delivered the discourse noticed in our last lesson; we thus see how indefatigable he was in doing good.

Verse 2. *And he taught them many things by parables*] We have already (p. 135) defined parable to be "a comparison, a figurative speech, a riddle." Its

3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow.

4 And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

design is to make spiritual things more clearly understood by comparing them with natural objects, and so fix a deeper impression on the honest and attentive mind. In the language of Hannah More, "Parable is naturally adapted to engage the attention, is level with the capacity of all, and conveys moral or religious truths in a more vivid and impressive manner than the dry didactic mode, and by laying hold of the imagination insinuates itself into the understanding and affections, and, while it opens the doctrine it seems to conceal, it gives no alarm to men's prejudices." In parable, all the circumstances introduced may not have an application to the thing intended; that, however, is of no consequence, for a resemblance in the *principal* incidents is all that is required. Neither does it matter whether the relation itself be true history or fiction; for the force of the parable lies in the justness of the application. *Doctrine*] Teaching, instruction.

Verse 3. *Hearken*] Listen! This interjection seems designed to call their attention to the truths he was about to deliver. *There went out a sower to sow*] A "sower" is one who sows or scatters seed—a farmer.

Verse 4. *Some seed fell by the wayside*] The hard pathway leading through the field, where the constant travelling would prevent its growth, even if other causes did not make against it. *The fowls of the air devoured it*] Buckingham, in his Travels in Palestine, remarks, "We ascended an elevated plain where husbandmen were sowing, and some thousands of starlings covered

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

the ground, as the wild pigeons do in Egypt, laying a heavy contribution on the grain sown."

Verses 5, 6. *Some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth*] Very rich soils are sometimes stony; the expression means continued rock, with a thin strata of earth. *And immediately it sprang up, &c.*] In consequence of the warmth of the rock underneath, speedily germinated, and the covering of earth through which it had to work its way being thin, the blade soon sprang up. Rosenmuller says, "In Palestine, during the seed time, (which is in November,) though the sky is generally overspread with clouds, the seed in thin soils comes forward rapidly." *But when the sun was up, it was scorched, &c.*] When the clouds were dispersed and the sun shone forth brightly, the blade withered: Luke says, "as soon as it was sprung up." *Because it had no root*] There not being sufficient depth of earth for its roots to strike properly, or to afford sufficient moisture. Luke viii. 6. Thus that which was the cause of its early promise also induced its decay.

Verse 7. *Some seed fell among thorns*] Under the term "thorns" are comprehended briars, weeds, and every other worthless plant which infests neglected fields. *The thorns choked it*] By turning to Luke viii. 7, it will be seen that the seed "sprang up," but the thorns growing more rapidly, spread so fast as to "choke" the grain,

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

MATTHEW xiii. 10-17.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

leaving it neither room nor nourishment, in consequence of which it yielded no fruit.

Verse 8. *Other fell on good ground*] Where the soil was rich and deep, and carefully cleared of every thing which could obstruct the growth of grain. *And brought forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred*] The difference in the *yield* was probably owing to the quality of the ground, which, though all good, was not all *equally* good. A hundred fold increase was gathered by Isaac. Gen. xxvi. 12. Pliny states that Egypt and Sicily easily produced a hundred fold; and that in Africa four hundred times as much has been reaped as was sown.

Verse 9. *He that hath ears, let him hear*] A mode of calling attention to things of serious import.

MATTHEW xiii. 10-17.

Verse 10. *And the disciples came*] Meaning not only the twelve, but also such others as had especially attached themselves to Christ's ministry: perhaps the seventy may be intended. Mark says they came to him when he was "alone"—that is, after the multitude had departed. *And said, Why speakest thou in parables*] Mr. Townsend has the following excellent remarks on this subject:—"It will be observed that our Lord did not speak to the people in parables till the scribes and

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Pharisees had accused him of working his miracles by the power of an evil spirit. The Messiah then, in mercy and compassion to these hearers, and to all who were captious, began to address them in parables," that their attention being excited by the imagery used, they might be induced to seek into the hidden meaning, and that thus the truth of God might take hold on their hearts and consciences, as it were unawares.

Verse 11. *Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*] We believe the word "mystery" in the New Testament generally imports that which, though once partly or altogether hidden—a secret—is now *revealed*, though sometimes, as in the present case, only to a few, that they may make it known to others. "Mysteries" here, then, is not to be understood of things incomprehensible, as the word denotes in common language, but of the deep spiritual things belonging to Christ's kingdom, "especially," says Mr. Benson, "such as respect inward and vital religion," the nature of which the gospel was designed to reveal. The more particular instruction communicated to the "disciples" was probably given to them, 1st, As his chosen instruments in making known "the great salvation;" and 2d, Because they cultivated dispositions better fitted to receive those gracious communications than did the Jews generally, for we believe that the determinations of the divine Mind are always founded on the fitness of persons or things. *But to them it is not given*] Not "given" to be thus clearly and directly in-

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand.

structed, because, 1st, Their prejudices made against the reception of the spiritual kingdom Christ came to establish; and 2dly, Because they were not called to proclaim to others that Jesus was the Christ.

Verse 12. *For whosoever hath, &c.*] Whosoever improves the disposition for obtaining a true knowledge of Christ, and of the nature of his kingdom. *To him shall be given*] This desire will increase, and in consequence he will grow in the knowledge of God. The disciples (Judas excepted) seem to have thus improved their advantages, and therefore they were finally led into all truth, and made partakers of the full salvation of the gospel. *But whosoever hath not*] Does not improve the opportunities afforded. *From him shall be taken away, &c.*] In consequence of his misimprovement, not only the means of instruction will be lessened, but the knowledge and grace already obtained will slip out of his memory and heart, and so may be said to be "taken away." From this it appears that the delivering of truth in an enigmatical manner was justly considered a less profitable mode of instruction than direct teaching.

Verse 13. *Therefore speak I to them in parables*] "On this account, viz., to lead them into a proper knowledge of God. I use natural representations of spiritual truths that they may be led to inquire into and feel the force of the truths thus taught." *Because they seeing, see not*] Seeing my miracles, they [as a nation] recog-

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their*

nise not the power by which they are wrought, nor the end they are designed to accomplish. *And hearing they hear not, neither so they understand*] That is, they do not hear my plain teaching attentively—they do not lay their hearts to it. The passage is justly and elegantly paraphrased in the anonymous version of 1729, dedicated to Lord Chancellor King, "They overlook what they see, and are inattentive to what they hear."

Verse 14. *And in then is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias*] Is *again* fulfilled, for the prediction was first accomplished in the Jewish people about the time of the Babylonish captivity. This is therefore one of that class of prophecies which have a twofold signification. That Isaiah's prediction *did* refer to the gospel time, as well as to his own age, we have the express assertion of St. John, who says, (chap. xii. 41,) "These things said Esaias, when he saw his [Christ's] glory, and spake of him." The passage is taken from Isaiah vi. 9, 10, and is frequently quoted by the New Testament writers, yet with such variety of expression as shows that the apostles often quoted the Old Testament rather according to the sense than the letter. *Hearing ye shall hear, &c.*] In predicting we frequently say, "Such or such a thing SHALL happen," though we only mean to express the certainty of the event, without denying the freedom of the moral agents concerned in it, or detracting from that freedom in any degree.

Verse 15. *For this people's heart is waxed gross*] A

ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

gross or fat heart is a metaphor taken for that stupidity and sloth which is the result of sensual indulgence ; it had its origin in a notion the ancients entertained that a great quantity of fat about the heart stupified both the intellectual and sensitive powers. *Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed*] “We have here,” says Mr. Watson, “a most graphic illustration of a sensual, besotted man, oppressed with gluttony and riot ; who, scarcely half awake, is made to hear sounds which rouse not his heavy hearing, and listlessly to open his eyes upon some object, and drowsily again to close them, so that no thorough impression is made on his understanding.” *Lest they should see, &c.*] The original expression rendered “lest” is frequently used to indicate not the *design* for which a thing is done or permitted, but the *result* or consequence of that thing. We believe such to be the case here. Mark (iv. 11, 12) and Luke, (viii. 10,) however, in their narration of this conversation *seem* to convey the idea that Jesus spake in parables *for fear* the Jews should understand him, and thus be converted and healed. An examination of these passages will, we think, yield a very different result. Matthew states the *cause* of Christ’s speaking in parables ; Mark and Luke, the *intention* ; yet that intention was not to blind them, and so ensure their condemnation, for Mark, verse 33, says, “With many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.” “But if Jesus spake to the people ‘as they were able to hear,’ his answer to the disciples

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For, verily, I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*,

cannot reasonably be understood in any sense inconsistent therewith." *Lest at any time they should be converted, &c.*] Macknight renders this passage, "That seeing they may see, &c., IF PERADVENTURE, (a sense which the original term sometimes has, see 2 Tim. ii. 25,) they may be converted." This makes a clear and consistent sense; and does away the blasphemous idea that the compassionate Saviour designed the eternal perdition of his hearers.

Verses 16, 17. *Blessed are your eyes, &c.*] That is, happy are you, in having these things clearly unfolded to your minds. *For verily, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see, &c.*] St. Luke says, "Prophets and kings," because some of these "righteous men" were such, as David, Melchisedeck, &c. The words include all the ancient saints, who earnestly desired to see the Messiah, to hear his words, and to receive that fulness of grace which they knew he was appointed to convey.

Verse 18. *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower*] That is, its signification. St. Luke says, (viii. 9,) that this interpretation was given at the request of the disciples.

Verse 19. *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom*] Which, according to Luke viii. 11, is repre-

and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

sented by the "seed." The gospel is termed the "word of the kingdom," because it shows the nature, necessity, and excellence of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and points out the way of admission thereinto. It is aptly compared to "seed," as it contains within itself the germ of life, and needs but to be fostered to produce a "harvest of joy." *And understandeth it not*] That is, does not lay it to heart so as to understand it. *Then cometh the wicked one*] Mark (iv. 15) says, "Satan cometh immediately." *And catcheth away that which was sown in his heart*] "Lest," says Luke, "he should believe—and be saved." Truths that are not laid to heart and reflected on are here compared to seed lying exposed on the surface of the earth, liable to be at any moment picked up by the fowls of heaven, or, to drop the figure, to be caught away by Satan or his servants, who are ever ready to destroy any good which might result to man by his "considering his ways." This is commonly done by drawing off the attention, and fixing the mind on other things. *This is he which received seed by the wayside*] The man is compared to the field, or rather to the wayside of the field; and the figure teaches that he was as unfit for the proper improvement of the truth as the beaten pathway of a field is for successful vegetation.

Verse 20. *He that received seed into stony places is he that heareth the word*] Heareth with some degree of attention and application. *Anon*] Immediately. *With*

21 Yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for a while : for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word ; and the care of this world, and

joy receives it] Through susceptibility of mind perceiving its beauty, and feeling its force and truth. *Yet hath he not root in himself]* That is, the "word" hath not taken root in him. But what prevented the word "taking root?" Probably the want of decision, or his having no such abiding consciousness of his own weakness as to lead him to earnest prayer for divine help, and to constant vigilance. *Dureth for a while]* He is but a temporary and unstable disciple. *For when tribulation or persecution ariseth he is offended]* Difficulties and persecutions he had not looked for, and, like a man in a rough and rocky way, he stumbles at them, falls, and hastens to leave a path charged with such obstructions and discouragements. From this we learn that unless there be in the heart a deep consciousness of our weakness and need of the grace of Christ, and consequent cherishing of the "seed" sown by the gospel, we shall be very likely to take offence and fall away from the steadfastness of hope.

Verse 22. *He that received seed among thorns heareth the word]* With greater attention than did the others : it takes root in him, leading to faith in Christ, and consequent renovation of life. *And the care of this world]* The "anxiety;" so called because it divides or distracts the mind, drawing it in different directions ; not leaving us "leisure to be wise," or to attend to the concerns of the soul. The hinderances in this case to the "word" *bringing forth fruit to perfection* are "the cares of the

the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which

world," the "deceitfulness of riches," which promise far more of good than they ever yield to the worldly-minded, and the "pleasures of this life." A proper attention to the duties and cares of life, however, is not unfavourable to the development and progress of religious feeling and principle: it is in the *abuse* of these things that the danger lies.

Verse 23. *He that received seed into good ground*] Into an unprejudiced mind, a teachable heart. In one sense the "stony," the "thorny," and the "good" ground were all equally adapted to the reception of seed, for in each case it was received and sprang up: the different prosperity attending the vegetation was owing, not so much to difference in quality of soil as to other causes; in one there was not enough "depth"—not sufficient thought and prayer given to it; in another there was richness and depth of earth, but other things were allowed to remain in the ground, absorbing its strength, and depriving the seed of nourishment—the heart was divided with conflicting cares, and hence the word was "choked;" in the third example the ground was better prepared, not better by nature. *Is he that heareth and understandeth*] Laying that which he heard to heart, and practising it. Hence Luke says of him, "keeps it in an honest and good heart,"—made such by the grace of God, received through faith. *Which also beareth fruit*] He differs from the first class, or wayside hearers, by understanding what he hears; from the second, by "keeping" that which he had heard; from the third,

also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

by "bringing forth fruit with patience," or perseverance, as the original implies. "To hear, to understand, and to bring forth fruit are the grand evidences of a genuine believer. He who does not *hear* the word of wisdom cannot understand what makes for his peace; he who does not *understand* what the gospel requires him to be and to perform cannot bring forth fruit; and he who is not *fruitful* cannot be a disciple of Christ." *Some a hundred-fold, &c.*] All believers are fruitful, though not all equally so. Some, from the enjoyment of superior opportunities, or from possessing stronger natural capacities, or from superior diligence in cultivating the gracious influences of the Spirit, produce more fruit than do others. This is to the increase of their own happiness here and glory hereafter.

Luke (viii. 16, 17) and Mark (iv. 23-25) state that having finished the explanation of the parable, Christ used the following illustration and admonition. *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, &c.*] Thus showing them the use they ought to make of the instruction he had given them. *Take heed what ye hear*] That is, Carefully consider it, lest, failing to improve your privileges, they should become restricted. *With what measure ye mete*] This proverb occurs in the sermon on the mount as a caution against evil judging: here it is used as a persuasive to the serious hearing of the word: as if Jesus had said, According to the attention you pay to the instructions of heavenly wisdom shall be your improvement in it.

MARK iv. 26-29.

26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ;

27 And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

MARK iv. 26-29.

Verses 26, 27. *And he said*] To the multitude, for to them Jesus seems to be again addressing himself. This beautiful parable is recorded by St. Mark alone. *So is the kingdom of God*] In its beginning and increase in the heart. *As if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day*] Should sleep in the night and rise in the day ; that is, live in his usual manner. *And the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how*] Nor can any man tell. The *manner* in which grain vegetates, multiplies, and comes to perfection, is known only to Him who has established the law in conformity to which the work progresses. We know that suitable preparation of the earth, and due proportions of rain and sunshine are necessary to the production of a good crop ; we see the seed developing itself, and passing through its various stages, but as to the *manner* in which this is brought about, we are entirely ignorant. So with religion : we are instructed in the nature and necessity of faith ; we give attention to the means appointed of God, such as hearing the word, prayer, the ordinances, &c., and we mark the change produced in the disposition and conduct, but *how* the Spirit produces these results we know not. Still, as they cannot be produced if the influences of the Spirit be withheld, or we refuse to concur with them, we ought to strive to become "workers together with God." 2 Cor. vi. 1.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

Verse 28. *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself*] Spontaneously not needing the agency of man to produce the effect, after the ground is once prepared and the seed deposited. *First the blade*] The green, tender, grass-like shoot, which first starts out of the ground. Although it be but a blade, it is full of promise, for a healthy blade proves that a good seed is at the bottom of it, and that the seed has taken root. *Then the ear*] The unfilled green ear. The original signifies both the ear and the stalk which supports it. *Then the full corn in the ear*] The ripe wheat, swollen to its proper size by the nutriment which is afforded to it by the ground, and by the rains and dews of heaven; and ripened by the warmth of the sun. Now the agriculturist, having "sown in hope," prepares to "reap in joy." In this beautiful parable we are taught the progressive—the constantly progressive—influence of divine grace in the soul. The "blade" may represent the first acts of the soul toward God, as evidenced in its desires after him. It may be that the seed has remained hidden in the heart for some time, but only let it be fostered, and it will spring up. The "ear" may typify the steady, consistent profession: Christ's interest in the soul is a *growing* interest; and though the beginning be small, it will increase, if cherished. In this state we perceive the *outlines* of the divine image, exhibited in constant efforts after "righteousness and true holiness," shortly to be filled up and perfected. The "full corn in the ear" is emblematic of the mature Christian, who brings forth with patience a rich harvest of holy obedience and fervent love.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Verse 29. *When the fruit is brought forth*] The marginal reading gives the sense by saying, "When the fruit is ripe." The original may imply, *When the fruit delivers itself up*, namely, to the man by whom it was sown. This is a beautiful figure. The seed is represented as having accomplished that for which it was sown; it had produced the blade, the ear, the full corn, and now offers itself up to its owner. So when the soul is fully sanctified, it yields itself up, with all its powers, to the will and service of God, on earth, in assurance that it will be eventually gathered into the garner of heaven. *He putteth in the sickle*] *He sendeth out the sickle*, that is, the reapers; the instrument, by a common figure, being put for those who use it. *Because the harvest is come*] Literally the harvest time is when the grain or fruit is fully ripe: figuratively, it refers to the end of the world, when God will send forth to gather his people into his kingdom of glory.

"The leading doctrine of the parable seems to be, that the success of the gospel in the hearts of men is as certainly produced by divine influence as the fertility of seeds in the earth by the influence of the invisible power of God working in the elements; and that his servants are to sow the seeds of truth, as the husbandman his grain, in prayer and in entire trust on the power and goodness of God to make it fruitful. With firm faith therefore in these promises,—for the parable has the force of a promise,—let the ministers of God sow their seed."—*Watson*.

LESSON XIV.

Parables of the Tares and of the Grain of Mustard Seed.—MATTHEW xiii, 24-43; MARK iv. 30-34.

MATTHEW xiii. 24-43.

ANOTHER parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field :

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

NOTES ON MATT. xiii. 24-43.

Verse 24. *Another parable put he forth unto them*] To the multitude, whom he was still instructing by the seaside, probably near Capernaum. *The kingdom of heaven*] Here meaning the state of the world under the gospel dispensation, the design of which being to subject men to the spiritual dominion of God, and so fit them for heaven, it is metaphorically called "the kingdom of heaven," or "of God." *Is likened*] Or may be compared. *To a man who sowed good seed in his field*] "The simile," says Mr. Horne, "is not to the *man*, but to the *seed*:" we should rather refer it to the field. "Good seed," not only means *perfect*, as opposed to corrupt, but *unmixed, pure*. So God formed our first parents upright, and sowed nothing but good in his whole creation. And Christ sowed only the "good seed" of truth in his church, and planted it with such as were truly righteous.

Verse 25. *While men slept*] That is *in the night*. *His enemy came and sowed tares*] He chose the night time, because then his operations would be less likely to be noticed. This shows him to have been a watchful and industrious, as well as artful enemy; ready to take

advantage of every opportunity to work mischief. As the word "zizania," rendered "tares," is said not to occur elsewhere in Scripture, there is considerable diversity of opinion as to what is really meant. Mr. Wesley, Dr. Campbell, and many others suppose the "darnel," or *lolium temulentum* of botanists, to be intended. "This plant," says the Pictorial Bible, "is described by Russell and Forskall as well known to the people of Aleppo, often growing abundantly in their corn fields. They separate the seeds from the wheat after threshing, by means of a fan or a sieve. The poisonous effects of the *temulentum* have been ascertained by many experiments, though the deleterious principle is so volatile that it escapes the cognizance of the chemist; for when analyzed, the meal was found to consist of six constituent parts,—one of gluten, four of starch, and one of saccharine matter, all of which we know are not only harmless, but nutritious. Campbell says that the straw of the zizania has the same effect on cattle as the seed has on men, and that this weed has a sufficient resemblance to wheat to justify all that is said in the parable. *Among the wheat*] With which the field had been originally sown. "Wheat" is the most common and most valuable kind of grain grown for the service of man. There are at least fifteen species of it, and perhaps many more. This grain is almost everywhere cultivated, both in the temperate and torrid zones. The same weight of wheat yields a greater quantity of flour than any other grain: it is also the most nutritious." *And went his way*] There seems to be something very expressive in this: it implies that the enemy knew his seed and his soil, and that if he could but succeed in getting his "tares" sown, they would yield an abundant harvest, to the serious

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

detriment of the good seed, his neighbour's loss, and the gratification of his own malicious passions.

Verse 26. *But when the blade*] Of the wheat. *Brought forth fruit*] When it began to ear. *Then appeared the tares*] Then they were first discovered to be tares. They had sprung up and grown with the wheat, but their likeness to it had hitherto prevented their being noticed. The true character cannot be certainly known by professions, by "blades," and leaves, and flowers, but by fruits.

Verse 27. *So the servants of the householder*] Or, proprietor of the estate, as the original signifies. *Good seed*] Pure, unmixed wheat.

Verses 28, 29. *An enemy hath done this*] Mr. Roberts states that it is still very common in the "East" for evil-disposed persons to sow seeds destructive to vegetation in the fields of those with whom they are at variance. This is done at night after the ground has been prepared for the reception of the "good seed." *Wilt thou that we gather them up*] That we pull them up by the root. *Nay, lest ye root up the wheat with them*] Not lest they should mistake wheat for tares, for they could now be readily distinguished,—but lest in eradicating the tares they should trample down or otherwise injure the wheat.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them : but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field :

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Verse 30. *Let both grow together until harvest*] At which time they could be safely separated from the wheat. We are informed that in some parts of Syria the zizania is drawn up by the hand in time of harvest, and bound into distinct bundles. This last mode of treatment is very corroborative of its claim to be identified with the "tares" of the present chapter.

Verses 31, 32. *The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, &c.*] Our Lord's design in using this parable seems to have been to set forth the large increase of his kingdom, and thus to afford encouragement to his disciples in their great work of planting the gospel. *Which indeed is the least of all seeds*] Not really the "smallest of all seeds," but *one* of the smallest, or the smallest producing so large a plant, and therefore used proverbially ; and, according to Sir Thomas Brown, the smallest of such as are apt to grow to a ligneous or woody substance.—*Harris. When grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree*] The term *tree* is applied by botanists to plants of the larger kind, which grow to the size of shrubs, and for that reason are termed *arborescentes*, or tree like ; and that there was a species of the mustard, or at least what the orientals

33 Another parable saith he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened.

comprehended under that name, which rose to the size of a tree, appears by some quotations brought by Lightfoot and Buxtorf from the Jewish writings. The Jerusalem Talmud represents a Jewish rabbin as saying that he had a stalk of mustard in his field into which he was wont to climb, as men climb into a fig tree. This, says Dr. Clarke, "may appear to be extravagant; but if it had not been usual for this plant to grow to a very large size, such relations as these would not have appeared, even in the Talmud; and the parable of our Lord sufficiently attests the fact. Some soils being more luxuriant than others, and the climate much warmer, raise the same plant to a size far beyond what a poorer soil or a colder climate can possibly do." A traveller (*Pinkerton's Voyages*) in Chil says, "I have travelled many leagues through groves of mustard seed, which were taller than horse and man, and the birds built their nests in them."

Verse 33. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven*] The former parable was designed to illustrate the public and visible growth of Christ's religion in the world; this, its secret and powerful operation in the soul of man. Leaven is *fermented* or *sour dough*. The influence of God's Spirit is aptly compared to that of this secret but powerful agent: not because they are similar in nature, but in their effects; for, as the leaven infuses itself through the whole mass of meal in which it is "hidden," assimilating it to its own nature, so the effect of divine influence is to make all partakers of

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

God's charity and purity. *Three measures of meal*] The original denotes a measure containing about a peck and a half English; and three measures were probably the quantity usually leavened at one time for domestic use.—*Watson*. It may be so, though we rather suppose the expression to have been used merely to complete the figure.

Verse 34. *All these things spake Jesus in parables*] Mark says, "With many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it:" which shows that their prejudices had rendered them morally incapable of profiting by plain and direct instruction. *And without a parable spake he not unto them*] That is, at this time, though he did afterward. Some commentators, however, prefer to understand it as declaring, in a general way, that our Lord used parables frequently.

Verse 35. *That it might be fulfilled*] Rather, Herein was fulfilled.—*Whitby*. "As the psalm, *literally* interpreted," says *Watson*, "could not deserve the appellation of a 'parable,' and 'dark sayings,' being a simple historical narration of God's dealings with the Jews until he raised up David to be their king, Asaph must have spoken of both people and king as typical personages, and therefore the Psalm looks forward to the Christian dispensation, and to Christ, the true David, as the king of his church." For a similar fulfilment of prophecy compare Psalm xxii. 18 with John xix. 24. The passage

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the chil-

referred to is Psalm lxxviii. 2. *Which was spoken by the prophet*] The composition of this psalm is attributed to Asaph, a descendant of Gershom, of the tribe of Levi, and one of the principal singers at the time of David; indeed in 1 Chron. xvi. 5 he is termed the "chief." He was evidently under prophetic influence, for in 2 Chron. xxix. 30, he is expressly called "Asaph the seer" or prophet.

Verses 36, 37. *From the foundation*] "The term is properly used of the founding of buildings, but is occasionally applied to the beginning of any thing. It was especially used of the *world*, because, according to the common notion of ancient times, the world was thought to be an immense plain surface, resting on foundations." —*Bloomfield*. *Went into the house*] The house he had left at Capernaum. *Declare to us the parable of the tares*] Explain it—tell us what it means. *He that soweth*] He that is represented by the sower of the good seed. *Is the Son of man*] In Matthew xvi. 13, Jesus applies this epithet to himself. The act of sowing is emblematic of the preaching of the gospel by Christ and his ministers.

Verse 38. *The field is the world*] That is, represents the church of Christ in the world, in which God sows nothing but the pure, unadulterated word of truth. *The good seed are the children of the kingdom*] By "children" we understand *subjects* of the kingdom—the

dren of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*:

righteous. "The good seed," says Baxter, "as sown, is the gospel; but as springing up in fruit, it is the faithful, who are properly the members of the church of Christ." *The tares are the children of the wicked one*] The tares represent hypocritical professors of Christianity, who, though they put on the appearance of godliness, are really unchanged in heart, and still "led captive by Satan at his will." Notwithstanding the utmost care of the ministers of the gospel, "tares" are still occasionally found among the "wheat;" false professors among true. This is to be lamented, because it is a serious impediment to the progress of Christianity. It furnishes, however, an argument in favour of the religion of Jesus, just as spurious coin is a certain evidence that the genuine is valuable. There is some difficulty in the application of the parable, in determining why the Saviour forbade his servants' rooting up the "tares," when they were discovered. We think it could not be lest they should mistake, and cast out real members of his kingdom, for at the time supposed the *fruit* was formed, and sufficiently distinguished between the tares and the wheat. Mr. Watson supposes that "our Lord is to be understood as prohibiting all civil coercion, and every species of persecution on religious grounds. Every church of Christ has the right, nay, the duty is imposed upon it, of separating from its communion all who hold fundamental error, or lead an unholy life, after due admonition, and with tender charity; but to separate men from the church in order to punish them—the work of Christ at the *harvest*, and his work alone—is a matter which is here wholly prohibited."

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and

Verse 39. *The enemy—is the devil*] A plain answer, says Mr. Wesley, to the great question concerning the origin of evil among men. We read in verse 25, that the enemy had sown these tares "while men slept." Some have supposed from this expression that the "servants" of the householder were neglectful of their duty, and were "asleep," when they ought to have been watching; and that the "ministers" of Christ are blameworthy in not keeping "tares" out of the church. We think, however, that this part of the parable will not apply in the spiritual interpretation, and was merely introduced to give point to the illustration. The *fact*, however, that false professors do sometimes find their way within the pale of the visible church, ought to be an admonition to all the "servants" of the Master to be watchful, diligent, and firm in *guarding* as well as "feeding the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers:" yet after all their effort they may be imposed on by the specious appearance of some. This shows that outward conformity does not necessarily suppose inward purity, and that without faith working by love, &c., no one will be finally approved.

Verses 40-42. *As the tares are gathered and burned, so shall it be in the end of this world*] That is, so shall it then be with those whom the tares represent—the ungodly. *The Son shall send forth his angels*] The reader will observe how high an idea Jesus gives the disciples of his future glory when he represents the angels

they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

as attending on him, ready at his order to assemble the whole world before him. *And they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend*] Rather all persons that have themselves offended, or caused others to stumble—all sinful persons. Reader, what is thy character? *And shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing, &c.*] A most expressive image of suffering. It is not certain that our Saviour meant to teach that hell is made up of *material* fire ; but it is certain that he uses this, at least, as a *representation*—and perhaps a faint one—of the horrors of that place of punishment. There is here no mockery, no attempt to create unnecessary fears. If the Saviour warns the wicked to escape the damnation of hell, rest assured there is a hell to escape.

Verse 43. *Then*] When the wicked shall have been separated from among the just. *Shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*] A most striking image to represent the glory and happiness of righteous men with God their Father. *Who that hath ears to hear, &c.*] An expression which denotes the great importance of the truths which have been or are about to be spoken. From this subject we learn, 1st. That the present state of things will have an end. 2d. Our destiny hereafter will depend upon our character in the sight of God. 3d. The fate of the wicked must be unspeakably awful. 4th. Glorious will be the state of

LESSON XV.

Parables of the Hidden Treasure, of the Pearls, and of the Net—Christ, crossing the Sea of Galilee, calms the Tempest.—MATT. xiii. 44-53; viii. 18-27; MARK iv. 35-41; LUKE viii. 22-27.

MATTHEW xiii. 44-53.

A GAIN, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he

the righteous. 5h. Being associated on earth with the people of God will be of no avail to us at the last day, if our characters have not been like theirs. God will sever the wicked from among the righteous. On earth they are mingled together, but *there* will be an everlasting separation by Him who cannot err.

NOTES ON MATT. xiii. 44-53.

It is the opinion of several commentators that the three parables next following were not proposed to the multitude, but to the disciples only.

Verse 44. *The kingdom of heaven*] Here meaning, we think, the *internal* kingdom; the knowledge that God loves us and we love him, which is the essence of true religion. *Is like unto treasure hid in a field*] It is like or may be compared to "treasure," on account of its value, and of the happiness which it confers by satisfying the desires of the soul, as "treasure" may be rendered subservient to supplying the wants of the body. The psalmist says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: and in keeping of them there is great reward." Psalm xix. 7-11. By

hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

the expression "hid in a field," Dr. A. Clarke and some others suppose a mine of silver or gold to be intended; but, without denying that this *might* be the case, though we deem it extremely improbable, we simply understand such valuables to be intended as, in the insecurity of society in ancient times, men were accustomed to bury in the earth, in order to protect them from the rapacity of others. In the East there are no facilities for the safe deposit of property as with us; and in consequence men were frequently obliged to hide valuables in the earth, in their tombs, or even to build them up in the walls of the houses. *The which, when a man hath found, he hideth*] That is, either covers it up again, or conceals his good fortune, not divulging it to any one. *And for joy*] At the prospect of obtaining possession of such vast riches. *Selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field*] That he might thus obtain a legal right to the treasure; for by a passage in the Mishna it appears that the Jewish law adjudged "that whosoever buyeth anything of his neighbour, if money be found in the article bought, it belongs to the purchaser." On the morality of the case supposed the parable determines nothing, it being the object of the Saviour to illustrate, in this and the following parable, the eagerness and care with which men ought to seek "the kingdom of heaven," by the diligence and prudence they usually manifest in the acquisition of wealth. Yet how few there are, comparatively, "who sell all,"—part with their self-righteousness, accursed love of gold, and other lusts—for the sake of the "true riches!"

Verses 45, 46. *The kingdom—is like unto a merchant,*

45 Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls;

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

seeking goodly pearls] This appears to indicate the antiquity of a still existing Oriental profession, that of a travelling jeweller—a person who deals in precious stones and pearls, and goes about seeking for opportunities of making advantageous purchases or exchanges. The “pearl” is a well-known gem, of a brilliant white, and is the production of a shell fish of the oyster kind. It consists chiefly of carbonate of lime, and is formed in layers or coats similar to those of an onion. Mr. Watson supposes that the adjacent coasts of the Red Sea made this article of traffic familiar to the Jews. The *kingdom* is compared to the *pearl*, and the merchant represents the inquirer after salvation. *When he found one of great price, sold all that he had, and bought it*] So with the travelling jewellers above noticed. In the course of their operations they frequently meet with some rich and costly gem, to obtain which they sell off every article of value they may possess, in order to raise the purchase money; well knowing that they will be gainers by so doing. The sacred writers often compare and prefer wisdom, or true religion, to costly jewels; (Job xxviii. 12–19; Prov. iii. 15;) and the Saviour declares (Luke xviii. 29, 30) that whoever shall seek “the kingdom of God” *rather than* the enjoyment of earthly good, shall receive in this life much greater satisfaction, and in the world to come life everlasting. Macknight remarks that the gospel is fitly compared to a *treasure*, as it enriches all who possess it, and to a *pearl*, because of its beauty and preciousness.

47 Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind :
 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and

Verse 47. *Again, the kingdom—is like unto a net, that—gathered of every kind*] We understand this parable, as well as that of the tares, to represent the mixed condition of the visible church on earth. The *net* spoken of is the seine or drag net of fishermen, and is here used as a symbol of the gospel, which, on being preached in the world, does, by the blessing of God, take hold of the mind or affections of men, and generally gathers such as are “caught” into the “communion of the saints.” By the expression “every kind” is meant, that as in sweeping the waters by means of a drag net, no distinction is made, but fish of “every kind” are liable to be entangled in the meshes, so the gospel is designed to bear on the hearts and consciences of *all* men, for the offer of salvation is made “without respect of persons.”

Verse 48. *Gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away*] This separation is emblematic of the separation of the wicked from among the good at the last day. Doddridge understands by “bad,” corrupt or putrid, and supposes it alludes to the drawing up some dead fish with the living. Others think, and we agree with them, that it simply means *refuse* or *useless* fish. As the Mosaic ritual prohibited the use of all fish without fins and scales, the Jewish fishermen must have been obliged to throw away, as useless, a considerable proportion of the fish which they took in their nets. Perhaps it may interest some to know that the Sea of Galilee, in the neighborhood of which our Lord delivered this parable, “abounds with fish, especially in the northern part of the lake. The fish are said to be most deli-

sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just;

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

cious. There is not much variety, but the best sort is the most common; it is a species of bream, equal to the finest perch."

Verses 49, 50. *At the end of the world*] But why not before? For various reasons, but more especially, perhaps, because the influence of good or evil men, even after death, may not, in some cases, cease until the "end come," and consequently, the awards of eternity cannot, in form, be determined until the consummation of such influence. *The angels shall—sever the wicked from among the just*] Does not this declaration show that as death leaves them, so judgment finds them? The character with which an individual quits this mortal scene will adhere to him throughout eternity; then "the righteous will be righteous still, and the filthy, filthy still." And in this fact, we think, may be found the *justice* and *reasonableness* of the divine decision which calls one class of men to the bliss of heaven and dooms the other to the misery of hell:—it is because the one *is* [not merely *has been*] "wicked," and the other *is* [not merely *has been*] "just:" and this character is the result of their own conduct while in a probationary state. In addition to this, we conceive the obligation of intelligent creatures to obey the will of their Creator to be a *perpetual obligation*; but as in eternity their character remains unchanged, and the "wicked" will be necessarily *eternally wicked*, so their *punishment* will be necessarily

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like

eternal; (Rev. xiv. 11;) while the "just," being also *eternally just*, their *bliss* will be necessarily eternal. See 2 Thess. i. 7-10. *And shall cast them into the furnace of fire*] An allusion to the most terrible punishment known in the east. Dan. iii. 6. *There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*] "Wailing" signifies great lamentation or mourning, and "gnashing of teeth" denotes either extreme agony or rage. Reader, such will be the condition of the finally impenitent! and the declaration of Scripture is, that the only way for thee to escape this awful doom is, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to bring forth the fruits of faith.

Verse 51. *Have ye understood all these things?*] "Divine truths," says Dr. A. Clarke, "must not be lightly passed over. Our Lord's question shows them to be matters of the utmost weight and importance." *They said, Yea, Lord.*

Verse 52. *Therefore*] Wherefore, since that is the case; referring to the question and answer contained in the preceding verse. *Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*] The word rendered "scribe" properly denotes a teacher of the Jewish law, but here a teacher of the gospel; the title being applied to the latter on account of the similarity of his office to that of the Jewish scribes. The phrase "instructed unto" means, *being made acquainted with, being initiated in*, the truths they were to teach. *Is like unto a householder*] Because as it is the duty of a "householder" or master of a family, to provide for the wants of those

unto a man *that is* a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53 And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

MATT. viii. 18-27.

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

around him, so they, as teachers instructed in all that related to the gospel, were to provide for the spiritual necessities of those to whom they ministered. *Which bringeth forth out of his treasure*] Rather, out of his *treasury*—his store room. *Things new and old*] That is, things *lately* acquired, or things that had been laid up a long time. Dr. Clarke and Mr. Watson understand the expression to denote *great abundance*, and think that our Lord intended to inculcate that those who teach others should themselves possess a fulness of knowledge on the great subjects of their ministry, and that such knowledge should be diligently used and improved for the benefit of others. Having ended these instructions Jesus departed thence.

MATT. viii. 18-27.

Mark states, (chap. iv. 35,) that on the evening of the day on which Jesus had delivered the foregoing parables he directed his disciples to pass with him to the other side of the Lake of Gennesareth, to the country of the Gadarenes. Mark v. 1; Luke viii. 22, 26. Doddridge remarks, that this appears to have been one of the busiest days of Christ's life, as all the events and discourses recorded from his miraculous cure of the demoniac who was blind and dumb, noticed in the twelfth lesson, to the passing over to the country of the Gadarenes, took

19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

place on it. Prior to their departure, however, an incident occurred, which is narrated by Matthew only, (chap. viii. 19, &c.,) and to that our attention is now to be given.

Verses 19, 20. *And a certain scribe said unto him*] For the meaning of the word "scribe" see the note on verse 52, page 184. *Master*] The original word means *teacher*. *I will follow thee, &c.*] That is, I will attach myself to thee—I will become thy follower or disciple. *Jesus saith unto him*] Not to prevent his becoming a disciple, but to acquaint him with the privations he might have to endure in following so poor a master. *The foxes have holes*] It is matter of dispute whether the common fox, or the jackal, sometimes called the eastern fox, is here intended. Both are well known in Palestine, though the latter is much more common than the former. As nothing more is here said of the animal alluded to than its habit of burrowing in the earth, which is common to both the fox and jackal, and as both were frequently included under the same general name, we cannot determine which is the animal designed by the Saviour, or whether he did not speak indifferently of either. It is not a matter of much consequence. *The birds of the air have nests*] Have places of repose and shelter. The original word is said to mean a *perch* or *roost*, not a nest, or place of hatching, for which a different word is used. *But the Son of man*] This title occurs many times in the gospels, and is always used by Christ himself, never by

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

any other person. "Son of man" is a Jewish phrase for a real human being, but "THE Son of man" is a designation of Messiah, and is taken from Daniel vii. 13, where everlasting dominion is ascribed to him under that title. *Hath not where to lay his head*] What a touching exhibition of the poverty of Him who, "though he was rich, (being Lord of all,) yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Considerable light is thrown on this text by a quotation from an Arabian historian. Having stated that the Arabs had stormed Ptolemais, and taken it from the crusaders, he says, "No place was left to the Franks on the coast of this (the Mediterranean) Sea, *where they could lay their head.*" From this passage it would appear that the meaning of the Saviour is, he had no secure and fixed place of residence.—*Horne.*

We infer from our Lord's answer, that this scribe was influenced by mercenary motives in proposing to follow Jesus. He had probably heard the parables which the Saviour had just spoken, and understood them to illustrate the extent and prosperity of Messiah's kingdom; but, having no idea of a spiritual dominion, to which his preconceived notions would blind him, he interprets them of a temporal kingdom, and therefore proposed to attach himself to Christ from motives of ambition. Aware of this, Jesus acknowledges himself to be the Messiah, by appropriating to himself the title by which he was distinguished; but declares that, instead of being possessed of such a kingdom as this man expected, he "had not where to lay his head." Being disappointed in his hopes of temporal preferment, it is probable the scribe retired.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Verses 21, 22. *And another of his disciples*] Another of those who waited on his ministry; for the term "disciple" strictly means any one who came to be instructed, a *learner*. Tradition says this was Thomas, but we know of no proof to that effect. *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father*] After which, it would seem, he designed to follow Jesus. We do not suppose that this man's father was actually dead, but merely feeble, and not expected to live long; for it was a maxim among the Jews, that if a man had any duty to perform to the *dead*, he was, for the time, free from the observance of any other precept or duty. *Jesus said, Let the dead bury their dead*] This expression is evidently figurative, the word "dead" having one meaning in the beginning of the sentence, and another in the end. It is common to use the word "dead" to express indifference to a thing; as, "dead to the world" means, indifference to the pleasures, &c., of the world. Natural death, to man, is the separation of the soul from the body; spiritual death, the separation of the soul from God: men who live in sin are dead to God. Eph. ii. 1. Leave, then, the interment of the naturally dead to the care of those who are *spiritually* dead, but *follow thou me*. The questions may occur to some, *why* Jesus Christ gave this injunction? and, *how far* the principle is to be acted on? In reply to the former question, we suppose that the Saviour saw that a compliance with the request of this disciple would have been fatal to his religious happiness and usefulness, by throwing him again within the influence of wicked men; and also, that he designed to teach him and others that there may be cases where a proper regard to our

23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

spiritual welfare imperiously demands the yielding up of the most tender and affectionate attachments. In reply to the latter query, we would say that only where the call of God is *very* explicit are we to neglect the performance of those duties which nature, religion, and gratitude alike impose on us.

Verse 23. *When he was entered into a ship, &c.*] One of the common fishing boats, which probably belonged to one of the disciples, and waited on Christ when he was in the neighbourhood of the sea. It appears from Mark iv. 36 that others besides the twelve accompanied him, and that the multitude to whom the parables had been delivered had retired.

Verse 24. *A great tempest in the sea*] Luke says, "A storm of wind." The sea of Galilee, though generally calm, is liable to sudden and heavy gusts of wind which rush down on the lake from the bold, barren, and precipitous rocks and hills of sandstone which rise on its eastern shore. *Insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves*] The billows dashed against and into the ship, so that it was fast filling, and in danger of sinking. Mark iv. 37. The river Jordan, running through the lake, causes a strong current; and when this is opposed by contrary winds, which blow here with the force of a hurricane from the southeast, a boisterous sea is instantly raised, which small vessels cannot well resist.
—Dr. E. D. Clarke. *He (Jesus) was asleep*] Mark says, on a [rather, *the*] pillow, in the hinder part of the

25 And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O

vessel. The expression translated "hinder part," which, says Bloomfield, "was the most commodious one for a passenger," means the place at which the steersman usually sat. Some regard the "pillow" as denoting a piece of wood framed at the stern; but others prefer to consider it as a stuffed leathern cushion. The original, in its ordinary acceptation, means not only a pillow for the head, but a cushion on which one might sit or lie down.—*Pictorial Bible*. The labours of the day had probably fatigued Jesus greatly, and he slept soundly and serenely.

Verse 25. *His disciples awoke him*] Being exceedingly alarmed at their situation. Luke (viii. 23) says, "they were in jeopardy." *Save us; we perish*] "Save," here, means deliver us from our danger. This petition shows that they had some confidence in the ability of the Saviour to deliver them, if he were aroused to a sense of their situation; but they deemed it necessary to awake him from sleep that he might exert his power: they could not, therefore, have understood his real character.

Verse 26. *He saith unto them—O ye of little faith*] "Faith" here, as in most places of the New Testament, includes in it the idea of *trust*. They were "of little faith" in not confiding in his power to save as well when asleep as when awake. Mark indeed says, "How is it ye have no faith?" but this is certainly hyperbolic, as we sometimes say, Such a one has no strength; when we merely mean he has but little. The language of their petition shows that they were not without faith; for though any company of seafaring men might arouse

ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

their commander when they were in imminent peril, they would not address him in such language. But the faith of the disciples was not that *entire trust* which tranquillizes the soul in the hour of trouble, and gives assurance in the midst of danger. They had often witnessed Christ's power over nature, and, so long as he was with them, they ought to have rested satisfied. For the want of this faith he justly upbraids them. *He rebuked the winds, &c.*] Addressed them, as a master might do a company of turbulent servants, and commanded them to be still. Mark iv. 39. What a power was this! What evidence of his divinity! *And there was a great calm*] That is, the violence of the wind, and the dashing of the waves immediately ceased, and the sea became instantly placid. The *suddenness* of the perfect calm is a proof of the reality of the miracle; for after a storm a body of water is never perfectly smooth until some considerable time has elapsed.

Verse 27. *But the men marvelled*] Mark says, "they feared exceedingly," and Luke, "they, being afraid, wondered." They appear to have stood in awe of him, and indeed it must have been a scene well calculated to impress the mind. It may appear singular to some persons that the disciples should be astonished much at this display, when they had witnessed so many instances of Christ's power. To this we reply, That hitherto his miracles were generally upon diseased persons; and that, till now, he had given no proof of his ability to restrain the fury of the elements, which, it seems, were

LESSON XVI.

Christ heals the Gadarene Dæmoniac.—MATT. viii. 28-34; MARK v. 1-20; LUKE viii. 26-39.

MARK v. 1-20.

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

thought less subject to human control than distempers of the body. To command the elements of nature is mentioned, Psa. lxxv. 7, as the peculiar property of God. *Saying, what manner of man is this*] "Man" is not in the original; and the text would have been better translated, What kind of *person* or *being* is this? for there was here an overwhelming manifestation of the glory and power of Christ's divine nature; though, like light from a parted cloud, it was quickly shrouded again in the veil of his humble condition and demeanour.—*Watson*. Dr. A. Clarke translates the passage, "How great is this person!"

NOTES ON MARK v. 1-20.

Verse 1. *And they came into the country of the Gadarenes*] Which, Luke says, was "over against Galilee." Matthew calls this the "country of the Gergesenes." Origen states that there was formerly a city called Gergesa in this neighbourhood, which gave its name to the district around. His language is, "Gergesa, from whence were the Gergesenes, is an ancient city, near the lake called Tiberias; above which is a precipice, adjacent to the lake, where is still shown the place where the swine were cast down by the devils." Gadara, according to Josephus, was the capital city of Perea, (the country beyond Jordan,) and was situated

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately here met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

in a southeast direction from the lake, about eight miles from its southern point. It gave name to a district which extended to the lake of Tiberias. From the expression "*country of the Gadarenes*," we presume that our Saviour merely entered the district, but did not proceed so far as to the city of Gadara. As Gergesa is not mentioned in history, it would seem to have been a less important place than Gadara, and less extensively known, though still familiar to the inhabitants around, for which reason Mark and Luke, not writing for natives of Palestine, might naturally be induced to indicate the locality by a reference to the more important city of the two, although it probably was not as near the scene of action as was Gergesa.

Verse 2. *There met him, out of the tombs*] Luke (viii. 27) says, "out of the city;" but Campbell informs us, that the passage in Luke ought to be rendered, "There met him a man *of the city*," &c.: this reconciles Mark and Luke. "Tombs" or sepulchres, not only among the Jews, but other easterns also, were often excavated in the rock, and sometimes serve as places of abode for very poor people, and as hiding places for robbers. Travellers, also, often avail themselves of the shelter afforded by these places, when overtaken by the night. Captain Light visited the scene of this miracle, and states that "the tombs still exist in the form of caverns, in the sides of the hills that rise from the lake." They extend to a distance of more than a mile from the present town. Mr. Buckingham describes a tomb which he visited in this neighbourhood as being about eight feet high, and

3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters

twelve paces square, which was turned into a family residence, and the sarcophagus, or stone coffin, used as a provision chest. It had no light but what was admitted through the door way, and was entered by a descent of three steps. *A man with an unclean spirit*] Matthew (viii. 28) says, there were *two*. There is in this, however, no contradiction, but only a greater particularity in this instance in Matthew's statement. But may not this apparent discrepancy be satisfactorily accounted for? Let us see. Mark and Luke state that Jesus had gone over to the country of the "Gadarenes;" now, if Campbell's criticism be correct, would it not be very natural for these historians to name the one, and only the one, as he alone seems to have been a citizen of Gadara? We think so. But it is also probable that one of these unfortunate men was more distinguished, in some way, than was the other, and that therefore Mark and Luke only mention the case best known, which was that of the Gadarene. It further appears, from Luke's statement, that this poor man had been thus afflicted for a "long time;" and that his constant dwelling was in the tombs, the gloominess and solitariness of the place probably agreeing with the diseased state of his mind: which, from a comparison of Mark and Matthew, appears to have been that of a raging madman, "exceeding fierce," so that it was dangerous for persons to pass that way. Luke seems to intimate that his fondness for these gloomy abodes was the direct result of demoniacal influence.

Verse 4. *He had been often bound, and the chains*

and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

had been plucked asunder by him] Through the strength communicated to him by his disease. The "strength of madness" has become a proverbial expression.

Verse 5. *Crying, and cutting himself with stones*] By "crying" we presume a sort of hallooing to be meant. The circumstance of cutting himself with sharp stones is quite agreeable to the usual custom of maniacs, who often tear their flesh, and cut it with whatever they can lay their hands on.

Verse 6. *Worshipped him*] That is, as Luke (viii. 28) has it, "fell down before him;" prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus, doing him homage after the eastern fashion. How humiliating to Satan to be thus compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of Christ!

Verse 7. *What have I to do with thee*] This phrase the Hebrews were in the habit of using when they did not wish to be troubled with the company or importunity of those to whom it was addressed. Ezra iv. 1-3; John ii. 4. *Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God*] Dr. A. Clarke is of opinion that the word "Jesus" ought to have been left out of this passage, as it does not occur in a great many of the best and earliest copies of the Scriptures. The expression "Most High God" seems to have been first given with reference to the exalted abode

8 (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou unclean spirit.*)

9 And he asked him, *What is thy name?* And he answered, saying, *My name is Legion* : for we are many.

of God in heaven. The appellation may also refer to the supreme majesty of the Deity. *I adjure thee, &c.*] This form of speech usually denotes *to put any one on oath*; here, however, it seems to mean earnest entreaty—"I beseech thee," &c., as in Luke viii. 28. *That thou torment me not*] That is, by obliging me to go to the place of torment. Unhappy spirit, he dreaded the anguish of his own hell! Matthew has an additional expression of fearful import—"Before the time." From these words it appears that this demon knew there was a time determined by the divine Judge when he would be subjected to still more severe torments: *he*, at least, was not infidel in this respect. Here was such a reference to the final sentence which Christ was to pass on those evil spirits at the end of the world (Jude 6) as could not be dictated by lunacy.

Verse 8. *For he (Jesus) said, (Luke, had said,) Come out, thou unclean spirit*] This command seems to have been given before the demon made his request.

Verse 9. *Jesus asked him*] Asked the demon. *What is thy name?*] Spirits, both good and evil, are represented in Scripture as having names; perhaps this may be in mere accommodation to human practice. Our Lord could not have been ignorant who this demon was, but probably asked the question, that the bystanders might have the more occasion to admire the power by which the miracle was wrought. *He answered, Legion, &c.*] The Roman legion, from which, possibly, this appellation was derived, generally consisted of about six thou-

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

sand men. The phrase became proverbial among the Jews for any great number, without being intended to express that number exactly. It seems to be in this sense that the demon used it, as Luke's testimony is, "that *many devils* had entered into him." Mr. Watson remarks, "The name imports that the spirit who spake was one of authority and command among the *orders* and *princeloms* of hell, and that the other spirits then present were subordinate to him. This appears from his acting in the name of the rest;" and we presume it to be from this circumstance that Mark speaks of the possession in the singular number, while at the same time he allows "they were many."

Verse 10. *And he besought him much*] That is, this evil spirit greatly besought Jesus. What a consoling thought it is, that notwithstanding the malignity and power of Satan and his servants, they are subject to the control of Christ. If modern times are not familiar with these spectacles of demoniacal possession,—the greatest calamity which could befall mortals,—let us not forget that it is our great privilege to live under the mediatorial reign of Him who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, or to give praise to our Saviour for that restraint which he places upon the power and subtility of Satan. *That he would not send them away out of the country*] Luke says, "That he would not command them to go into the deep," meaning the place of future punishment, not the sea, for into that they afterward went of their own accord. The inhabitants of this district seem to have been a mixture of Jews and heathen, and it is probable that this demon knew he could exer-

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine :

cise greater sway over their minds than over the minds of most others. From the subsequent conduct of the people, (verse 17,) we judge that they had sacrificed religious principle to worldly gain.

Verse 11. *A great herd of swine*] The word *herd*, here applied to swine, is now commonly given to *cattle*. It formerly signified any collection of beasts.

Verse 12. *Send us into the swine, &c.*] When they made this request, it was probably with the design of destroying the swine, and so preventing any good to the Gadarenes which the miracle of delivering the demoniacs might otherwise have on them ; well knowing that the owners would be more affected by their own loss than by the advantage resulting to the dispossessed.

Verse 13. *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave*] But why ? Could he have been ignorant of their intention ? No : but because he saw it would be productive of the greatest amount of good ; because it would render the miracle more public, prove the reality of the possession, and make men understand both how great the power of evil spirits is, and how terrible the effects of their malice would be, if they were not restrained. Besides, as Dr. Doddridge judiciously remarks, " No miracles are more to be suspected than dispossessions, as there is so much room for collusion in them ; but it was self-evident that a herd of swine could not be confederates in any fraud : their death, therefore, in this instructive and convincing

and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

circumstance, was ten thousand times a greater blessing to mankind than if they had been slain for food. *And the herd ran down a steep place into the sea*] It seems that the demons, who had caused the madness of the men, produced a similar effect on the swine—they ran mad. *And were choked*] Were suffocated, by drowning; for our word “drown” comes from a term which signifies *to choke*. This must have been a severe loss for the owners, as the number of swine was about two thousand. Although the territory wherein this scene was enacted was reckoned as belonging to Syria, and not to Palestine, it having been reannexed to Syria after the death of Herod the Great, yet there were dwelling in it a great many Jews, and we presume these swine to have been Jewish property. Swine were reckoned among unclean animals, (Lev. xi. 7; Deut. xiv. 8,) and their flesh was therefore prohibited to the Jews as food: Michaelis, however, and some other commentators are of opinion that though they might not *eat* them, they were allowed to rear and traffic in them. About seventy years before Christ, however, a law was enacted (which proves the previous existence of the practice) that no Jew should be permitted to rear swine; but the prohibition does not appear to have had complete effect.

Verse 14. *They that fed the swine fled and told it, &c.*] Ran into the city, and into the country around, and told what had occurred to the swine, and (Matthew

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

viii. 33) "what was befallen to the possessed of the devils."

Verse 15. *Sitting*] Luke says, "At the feet of Jesus." Bloomfield remarks that "the being *seated* is mentioned as a mark of sanity of mind, since maniacs rarely sit." *And clothed*] He was probably clothed either by the disciples or those who accompanied them. Mark iv. 36. *And in his right mind*] Restored to the use of his reason. This, taken in connection with the destruction of the swine, could leave no doubt of the reality of the miracle. *They were afraid*] They were struck with *awe*, at the stupendous work, and felt as if in the presence of God.

Verse 17. *And they began to pray him to depart, &c.*] Besought Jesus to depart out of their district. We are by no means certain of the motive which induced this request, but incline to the opinion that they feared additional losses would come on them. It may be, however, that it was a sense of their own unworthiness, similar to that by which Peter appears to have been influenced when he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Verse 18. *When he was in the ship*] About to take his departure. *He that had been possessed prayed that*

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him. And all men did marvel.

he might be with him] Desired to accompany him as one of his followers.

Verse 19. *Jesus suffered him not, &c.]* Various reasons have been conjectured for this refusal. Dr. Clarke supposes that it was because he would not have the happiness of the man's relatives at witnessing his restoration deferred. Perhaps, also, Jesus knew that the man would be "as a light shining in a dark place," if left in the neighbourhood of his own home. Be the reason what it might, it was doubtless a sufficient one.

Verse 20. *He began to publish in Decapolis, &c.]* The Greek word "Decapolis," signifying *ten cities*, does not denote a continuous district of country, but ten detached cities scattered through an extensive region: these cities, probably, all but one, lay on the east of the Jordan. The one on the west of Jordan was Scythopolis.—*Alexander's Geography.* *And all men did marvel]* We think that it may be safely concluded that this man was more useful in his own country than he would have been elsewhere. This should teach us to hold all our desires in subjection to the will of God.

LESSON XVII.

Jesus dines with Matthew—Heals the infirm woman, and raises Jairus's daughter.—MATTHEW ix. 10-26; MARK ii. 15-22, and v. 22-43; LUKE v. 29-39, and viii. 40-56.

LUKE v. 29-39.

AND Levi made him a great feast in his own house; and there was a great company of publicans, and of others that sat down with them.

NOTES ON LUKE v. 29-39.

After leaving the Gadarenes, Jesus recrossed the sea of Galilee to Capernaum, called by Matthew, (ix. 1,) "his own city," as it was the principal residence of our Saviour after the commencement of his public ministry, and was received by the people "gladly."

Verse 29. *And Levi made him (Jesus) a feast, &c.*] By comparing verse 27 of this chapter, or Mark ii. 14, with Matt. ix. 9, it will be seen that this person was indifferently called Matthew or Levi; it being common among the Jews for a person to have two or more names. He had formerly been a publican or tax gatherer of Capernaum, but was now one of the twelve apostles. Comp. verses 27, 28, with Luke vi. 15. He was probably a man of wealth; and Newcome supposes this entertainment to have been given about six months after his call to the discipleship. It is worthy of remark that Matthew does not mention in whose house the feast was held;—an evidence of his humility that ought not to be overlooked. *There was a great company of publicans and of others, &c.*] Matthew says, *publicans and sinners*, terms of reproach and contempt, and meaning either heathen, or such Jews as associated with heathen, and were therefore considered on a footing with them

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that

Christ's urbanity in this respect gave great offence to the scribes and Pharisees, who found fault with him for eating with persons whom they considered contemptible.

Verse 30. *But their scribes, &c., murmured against his disciples*] We confess our inability to satisfy ourself as to the time when the conversation here noted took place. Commentators usually suppose it to have occurred at the entertainment; but if the self-righteous Pharisees deemed it derogatory to the character of Christ to associate with publicans, how came *they* to be there? We incline to the opinion that this conversation was subsequent to the entertainment. *Why do ye eat with —sinners?*] By comparing this passage with Matt. ix. 11, we find that the complaint was not brought against the apostles only, but that the Saviour was also included. The heathen, as well as the Jews, accounted it a pollution to eat with the impious. The Pharisees thought more of their own character than of the good of others; Christ sought to benefit mankind by his instructions, regardless of censure or praise, and, in pursuance of this design, freely mixed with society. That prejudice which would lead professors of religion, and especially its public teachers, to neglect souls because they are more polluted than some others, is rebuked in the presence of this example.

Verse 31. *Jesus, answering, said*] Either he heard their murmuring, or, by his omniscience, knew what was passing, and saw fit to reply, that he might justify both himself and his disciples, and teach the haughty

are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

Pharisees a very necessary lesson. He vindicates himself by drawing an illustration from the employment of physicians. Their business is, to prescribe for the sick, not for those who are in health, and they are in their proper occupation when they are attending on the sick. So Jesus, who came in behalf of sinful men, was in his proper sphere when among sinful men, endeavouring to instruct and reform them. *They that are whole need not a physician, &c.*] This is said to have been a proverb in use among the Jews, and is very forcibly applied in the present case. The "whole" literally means persons in health—those who are not sick: and figuratively, we understand righteous beings to be intended by the expression. A "physician" is one who studies and practises the art of healing diseased or sick persons; and is here designed to point out the person and character of Jesus. The "sick" are, literally, persons out of health, and who therefore need a physician's care, that by the use of proper remedies they may, through God's blessing, be recovered from sickness: and figuratively, the word denotes all those who feel themselves sinners, and as such need and desire the pardon of their sins. The Jews metaphorically termed a teacher of the law "a physician of souls;" and, taken in connection with this thought, our Saviour's reply may be understood both as a simple statement of the motives which governed him in his intercourse with "sinners," and as a severe and merited rebuke to these "scribes," these "physicians of souls," for neglecting their appropriate duties.

Verse 32. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners*] But did not Christ come into the world to "call,"

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

or save, all men? He did; for the apostle declares that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, that he should taste death for every man. Heb. ii. 9. Is any man naturally righteous? No; for Paul declares, Rom. iii. 9, 10, "They are all under sin; there are none righteous, no, not one." Then how is the passage to be understood? Does not Christ refer here to the scribes and Pharisees, who had murmured against him? We think not. He simply answers the question, "Why does your master eat with sinners?" by declaring that the object for which he came into the world was to call sinful men, not righteous beings, to repentance. Consequently, sinful beings are the very ones with whom he should associate, in order to do them good, and to accomplish the design of his mission.

By referring to Matthew ix. 13 it will be seen that he gives an additional and very important particular in connection with this conversation, not mentioned by the other evangelists. *Go ye, says Christ to the scribes, and learn what that meaneth*] Go and learn *what that is*, a phrase used by the Jews when they wished any one to study a text of Scripture, and draw out its meaning. The passage referred to is Hosea vi. 6. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*] This does not mean that God was displeased with sacrifices, (for he had appointed many, and therefore they must be gratifying to him,) but that he prefers to them feelings and acts of benevolence and humanity, which is here the import of the word rendered "mercy," (even though the engaging in those acts of benevolence should prevent the offering of the accustomed sacrifice, or the performance of the usual

33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

external rites of religion, which is what is implied by this term,) to the sacrifice itself, if presented at the expense of those kindly feelings. The application is easy: The Pharisees had, through a false zeal for the honour of religion, neglected the cultivation of those benevolent feelings toward others which God so much loves; they are here admonished to change their course.

Verse 33. *And they* (the scribes and Pharisees) *said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, &c.* Matthew (ix. 14) states that this question was put to Christ by the disciples of John the Baptist; while Mark (ii. 18) intimates that the followers of the Baptist and of the Pharisees were united in the inquiry; the latter was probably the fact, and thus Mark and Luke are reconciled. *But thine eat and drink*] The question intended was not, Why do *we* fast often? for doubtless they knew the motives of their own fasting; but, Why do not thy disciples fast as we do? The law of Moses enjoins but one fast—namely, the day of the annual atonement, on the tenth of the month Tisri; still, as frequent fasting had come to be regarded a mark of special sanctity, it was much used by the later Jews, especially by the Pharisees, who probably fasted twice in a week. Luke xviii. 12. And, seeing that Jesus taught a higher morality than any other teacher of his time, it must have been matter of astonishment both to the Pharisees and the disciples of John, that he did not pay more regard to so important an act of religious practice. This question Jesus answers by a threefold illustration.

Verse 34. *Can ye make the children of the bride-*

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?] That is, is it *fitting* they should do so? Can they fast consistently with the nature of a marriage-feast? Certainly not; for St. Mark adds, "As long as they have the bridegroom with them, *they cannot fast*." It is very common to say of things which are improper to be done, or which violate any rule or law of equity, that they *cannot* be done. There is in this reply an allusion to the festivities of an eastern nuptial feast, which, in Palestine, usually lasted seven days;* (Gen. xxix. 26, 27; Judg. xiv. 12;) during which time the guests, here denominated "children of the bride-chamber," were entertained with great hilarity. The "bridegroom" represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and the "children" his disciples. The point of the illustration is, It would be as unseemly for my disciples to fast while I am with them in my bodily presence, (fasting being an expression of grief or penitence,) as it would be for the guests at a marriage-feast to mourn or weep. Matt. ix. 15.

Verse 35. *But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away, &c.*] Jesus here drops the figure of the feast, and evidently speaks of himself. This "taking away" is therefore a prediction of his seizure by the high priests, and subsequent death on the cross. *Then shall they fast*] The expression here used does

* Brunings states that the Jews distinguish between a bride who is a *virgin* and one who is a *widow*; and that the nuptial feast of the former lasted a whole week, but for the latter it was limited to three days.—HORNE.

36 And he spake also a parable unto them: No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

not convey a command from our Lord to his disciples, but is merely a declaration of what would in fact happen, or what a sense of propriety, or a change of circumstances, would induce his disciples of themselves to do. The import is therefore better expressed by *will* than by *shall*.—Campbell.

Verse 36. *No man putteth a piece of new garment upon an old*] The original implies a piece of rough, undressed cloth, which has not yet been cleansed by the fuller: the marginal reading of Matt. ix. 16 is, therefore, the true meaning. *If otherwise*] That is, if he does. *Then both the new maketh a rent, &c.*] Cloth not fulled will shrink on being wet, and consequently, if patched into an old garment, will tear it. As it would be manifestly unsuitable to take such a piece of cloth to mend an old garment, so it would be unsuitable for Christ's disciples to fast and mourn while he was with them.

Verse 37. *No man putteth new wine into old bottles*] This is the third illustration. "Wine" is the juice of the grape; *new wine* is wine not yet fermented. *Else the bottles will burst*] The "bottles" here spoken of are flasks made of the skins of goats or sheep, which were used in all ancient nations, and still are among the Arabians, and in the southern parts of Europe. As these skin bottles are not easily distended when old and stiff, and yet have not sufficient strength to resist the fermentation of the new-made liquor, they are very liable to

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old *wine*, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

burst. The "old bottles" are, however, serviceable for other purposes.

Verse 38. *New wine must be put into new bottles, &c.*] Why? Because they are adapted to each other; inasmuch as the new bottle will swell and yield to the process of fermentation.



Verse 39. *No man, also, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, &c.*] Because there is a harshness about it, which makes it far less palatable than is the mellowness of the old. The meaning is, "To expect my disciples to fast *now* would be as unreasonable as to expect a man who has been accustomed to
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MARK v. 22-43.

22 And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and

the use of old, mellow wine, cheerfully to adept the comparatively sour and astringent juice of the grape as it comes from the press; and as unsuitable as to put new wine into old bottles. It would all be ill-timed, inappropriate, and incongruous."—*Barnes*.

MARK v. 22-43.

Verse 22. *And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers, &c.*] The "rulers" were those officers who were intrusted with the conduct, &c., of the religious services of the synagogue. Matthew says, this man came while Christ was conversing with the disciples of John, &c., as above stated. Is not this another presumptive proof that the conversation did not occur at the same time or place at which the entertainment was given? *And when he saw him, he fell at his feet*] Making obeisance by prostrating himself to the ground before Jesus, as was the custom of the easterns. Matthew says, he "worshipped him;" merely meaning, however, that he paid him reverence as a superior, for the term worship strictly means, homage to any superior, divine or otherwise.

Verse 23. *My little daughter lieth at the point of death*] The English version of Matt. ix. 18 represents Jairus as saying, "My daughter is even now dead;" but we think there is no real discrepancy between Mark and Matthew, since the Greek may be translated with equal propriety, "She is by this time dead," as Bloomfield

lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of *Jesus*, came in the press behind, and touched his garment:

renders it, that is, *is probably dead*, as he left her "a-dying," (Luke viii. 42,) or, with Macknight, "My daughter is almost dead:" either rendering will harmonize the three evangelists who notice the affair. "According to a Jewish rule, a daughter, until twelve years of age, is called 'a little one,' and at twelve years and a day she is called a young woman." From Luke viii. 42 it appears that this girl was Jairus' only daughter—we are inclined to believe her his only child. *Come and lay thy hands on her*] Imposition of hands was a rite which, from the earliest ages, had been in use among the Jews on imploring God's blessing on any person; in conformity with this custom our Lord laid his hands on the "little children," Matt. xix. 13; and directed his disciples to lay hands on the sick, that they might be healed. Mark xvi. 18. *And she shall live*] That is, she shall be recovered from her illness, if still alive; or she shall be restored to life, if dead.

Verse 21. *Jesus went, and much people followed*] Probably expecting to see the miracle.

Verses 25-29. *And a certain woman, &c.*] The cure here narrated is supposed to have been effected in the streets of Capernaum, and is a remarkable proof of the condescension of the Saviour. The disease was such as

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

to render the woman ceremonially unclean, and a sense of delicacy would induce her to keep the nature of her disorder as private as possible. Thus circumstanced, she could not openly come and claim the aid of Jesus; yet the necessity of her case, and her belief in his ability to heal her, strongly impelled her to approach and touch him secretly. We think it very likely that the fact that others had been healed by touching him, as stated Luke vi. 19, was known to her; and was an additional encouragement. Under these combined influences she mixed with the press who followed Jesus, and ventured to touch the "hem," or "border" (Matt. ix. 20, Luke viii. 44,) of his garment, saying *within* or *to herself*, *If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole*] And immediately she felt that she was healed. The "hem" here spoken of rather agrees with what we term a tassel than a hem, being a tuft of threads or strings, usually eight in number, depending from each of the four corners of the mantle. They were worn in obedience to a divine command, (Num. xv. 37-40,) and were designed to remind the people of the obligations they were under to keep God's commandments. A similar garment is still worn by the Jews, even in Christian countries, when engaged in public religious exercises. "To touch the lower tassels was considered a mark of profound respect. It is not, however, exclusively a Jewish custom, for we have examples of heathen touching or kissing the fringe of a great man's robe as a mark of respect and to gain his

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

favour. The custom is still retained in the East.”—*Bloomfield*. “The Turk would bring us presents when he met us, kneeling and kissing the hem of our cloaks.”—*Evelyn’s Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 159. “St. Mark’s account of this woman,” says Mr. Watson, “presents a picture of almost hopeless disease, and the miseries resulting from its long continuance. ‘She had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse.’ She brought, therefore, to Christ, pain, poverty, disappointment, a troubled spirit, and a disorder dragging her rapidly to the grave. This extreme spectacle of wretchedness is brought before us as on purpose to teach us never to despair when we come to Christ.”

Verse 30. *Jesus, knowing that virtue had gone out of him, &c.*] It is evident that the ability to work miracles was inherent in our Saviour, and not derived from nor dependant on another, as was the case with the apostles. The word rendered “virtue” here means, also, power,—viz., *power to heal*, in which sense it is to be here understood. *Turned about and said, Who touched my clothes*] Luke (viii. 45) intimates that the crowd denied having done so, whereon Peter remarked that the multitude pressed on them, and seems to wonder that Jesus should ask such a question. It is evident from this that Christ’s question was misunderstood, for he meant not a touch caused by the jostle of the crowd

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

about him, *but the touch of faith*, in answer to which power to heal had gone forth from him.

Verses 32, 33. *And he* [Jesus] *looked around to see her, &c.*] It is evident from this that the person, and all the circumstances of the case, were known to Christ, and that he asked who had touched him, not from ignorance, but to show the woman that he was aware of the whole matter, and to induce her, for the encouragement of others, to make a public acknowledgment of her act, and the cure she had received. *The woman, fearing and trembling, fell down before him, &c.*] But why did she fear and tremble? We know not. Perhaps she feared she had been presumptuous in touching him under her circumstances, and dreaded a reproof on this account.

Verse 34. *Daughter*] This term of endearment was probably used to dispel her fears. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*] Her faith in whom, or what? In the "hem of his garment?" No; her faith in himself. She "had heard of Jesus," and appears to have entertained the highest notion of his dignity and power, as well as compassion. Her favourable opinion of Christ was, therefore, the ground of her faith, and her faith was in accordance with her opinion. She touched his garment in token of her reverence and faith, and thus trusted to be healed, not indeed without the knowledge of Christ,

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead : why troublest thou the Master any farther ?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken,

but without the knowledge of the crowd. The idea that she expected to be healed by stealth, and without the knowledge and concurrence of Christ, is contradicted by the commendation given to her faith ; for *that* faith would have been such as is exercised in charms, but not that *faith in Christ* which the gospel recognises, and which alone Christ could approve. *Go in peace*] This and such-like expressions were forms of affectionate and condescending farewells, and implied a desire for the spiritual as well as temporal good of the person, or persons, to whom they are addressed. *Be whole*] That is, *continue* to be whole, for she was already cured, verse 29. *Of thy plague*] Of thy disease ; literally, of thy *scourge*.

Verse 35. *While he yet spake*] To the woman. *There came from the ruler's*] That is, there came a messenger from his house, (for the ruler was still with Jesus.) *Which said, thy daughter is dead*] Having died since her father left the house. *Why troublest thou the Master*] Luke says, *Trouble not the Master*. From these words it would seem that the messenger, and probably those who sent him, had no just conception of the Saviour's power, deeming him to be one who might be useful while there was *life*, as in the case of any skilful physician, but who could render no service after the vital principle had left the body. The raising of the widow's son, however, which event had probably taken place some time before, (see Lesson ix., p. 98,) ought to have convinced them of his unlimited power.

Verse 36. *As soon as Jesus heard the word spoken,*

he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the

Namely, that the child was dead. *He saith to the ruler, Be not afraid, only believe*] Probably these words were dictated by a twofold motive—compassion, and a wish to excite an expectation of her restoration to life; for, 1st. As the father appears to have been tenderly attached to his daughter, he probably felt much depressed at the tidings of her death, even though he had expected such an event; and to cheer him, Jesus says, “Be not afraid:” and, 2dly. Wishing to direct to himself the man’s attention, and to lead him to expect some marvellous interposition of divine power, he says, “Only believe:”—Luke adds, *and she shall be made whole*, Luke viii. 50.

Verse 38. *And he cometh to the house, and seeth the tumult, &c.*] That is, when he arrived at the house, he perceived the “tumult,” or lamentation and vociferation of the persons assembled. Matthew says the minstrels, that is, the hired musicians, and people were “making a noise.” Wailing for the dead, by the relatives and friends of the deceased, is of very great antiquity among the Jews, as well as with the easterns generally, as appears from numerous passages in the Old Testament. Their expressions of grief are extreme. As soon as a person dies, all the females in the family set up a loud and doleful cry; which they continue as long as they can without taking breath, and the shriek dies away in a low sob. Nor do the relatives satisfy themselves with these manifestations of violent grief; for they hire professed mourners, usually women, who laud the virtues,

synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

beauty, &c., of the deceased. To all this, the Jews of our Saviour's time, and for some centuries earlier, (Jer. xlviii. 36,) added soft, melancholy music, to increase the expression of their sorrow. These "mourners" generally accompany the funeral procession to the place of burial, and rend the air with their wailings. The mourning usually continues eight days, though with less vehement lamentation than at first. The custom of hiring mourners seems to have been finally attended with some superstitious notions, for the rabbins enjoined that none, even of the poorer sort, should, at the funeral of a wife, have fewer than two flutes and one mourning woman; the opulent had many more. Various travellers bear testimony to the apparent feeling and *naturalness* of these hired plaints. Dr. Shaw says, "They perform their parts with such proper sounds, gestures, and commotions that they rarely fail to work up the assembly into some extraordinary pitch of thoughtfulness and sorrow." Jowett, during his travels in Palestine, in 1823, arrived at Napolose (the site of the ancient Shechem) immediately after the death of the governor, and "on coming in sight of the gates," says he, "we perceived a numerous company of females, who were singing in a kind of recitative, far from melancholy, and beating time with their hands. On our reaching the gate, the singing was suddenly exchanged for the most hideous shrieks." He afterward learned that these were a company of women who were "taking up a wailing" with the design, as of old, to make the eyes of all the inhabitants "run down with tears, and their eyelids gush out with waters." Jer. ix. 17, 18. Hartley relates that one morning, during his

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth

travels in Greece, the most plaintive accents he had ever heard fell on his ear. Following the direction of the sounds, they conducted him to a grave, over which a woman, hired for the occasion, was pouring forth lamentation, and mourning, and wo, in such doleful strains as could scarcely have been supposed other than sincere.—*Horne*. When Jesus entered the house it appears, from verse 37, that he only permitted three of his disciples, namely, Peter, James, and John, to go in with him.

Verse 39. *When he was come into the house he saith]* To the real and hired mourners. *Why make ye this ado]* Why make ye this lamentation? That Jesus did not intend this as a reproof is, we think, evident from *Luke's* report, (viii. 52,) *Weep not* : but that he simply intimated any further mourning to be uncalled for, as the girl would be restored to her friends. *The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth]* This language is enigmatical, or figurative, and the best commentators are agreed that the sense is, "She is not so departed as not to return to life, but is, as it were, asleep." Another solution of the passage is, that *Jairus* might be a Sadducee, and as one of their tenets was, "that there was no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit," (Acts xxiii. 8,) Jesus might have designed to say that the girl was not dead in their sense of the term,—was not annihilated,—but that the death of the human body might rather be compared to sleep. We prefer the former exposition. Death is frequently, in the sacred writings, compared to sleep : in all such cases the expression intimates that the person

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But, when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, *Talitha-cumi*: which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise.

spoken of still exists, and will awake, as one out of sleep,—that is, will arise from the sleep of death.

Verse 40. *And they laughed him to scorn*] “Scorn” implies *ridicule, derision*. They treated his declaration with contempt, “knowing,” as Luke says, “that she was dead.” *But when he had put them all out*] Matthew says (ix. 24) that Jesus had directed the crowd of mourners to “give place,” that is, had requested that they might be withdrawn; probably to avoid ostentation, and that the parents of the deceased child, and his three most intimate disciples, might more calmly attend to the miracle he was about to perform, and so be the more competent witnesses of the fact. When, in pursuance of this request, the company had gone forth, (for we need not suppose they were turned out,) *he taketh the father and mother of the damsel, and them that were with him*] The concurrent testimony of five credible witnesses being sufficient to confirm any fact. *And entereth in where the damsel was lying*] This was probably an upper room, it being customary for the Jews to lay the bodies of deceased friends there during the few hours which usually intervened between death and burial.

Verse 41. *He took the damsel by the hand*] As if he had been going to awake her out of sleep. *And said, Talitha-cumi*] These words are a mixture of Syriac and Chaldee, and therefore called Syro-Chaldaic; ~~it~~ was

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

the language commonly spoken in Palestine at that time. The proper translation is given by the evangelist,—*Damsel, arise.* Luke says, (viii. 55,) “Her spirit came again;” an expression which implies her to have been really dead, and that the soul exists separately after the body dies.

Verse 42. *Straightway*] Immediately—that instant. *The damsel arose, and walked*] Being restored not only to life, but to health: as is intimated by her walking and being hungry: for Luke says, in connection with her rising, (Mark also declares the same fact in the next verse,) *he commanded to give her meat*; since, though he had employed an extraordinary power to restore her to life, he willed that she should be continued in existence by the use of ordinary means. *And they*] Her parents, Luke viii. 56. *Were astonished with a great astonishment*] Were greatly surprised, as well they might be.

Verse 43. *He charged them straitly that no man should know it*] Our Lord could not suppose that the miracle could be kept strictly secret, for the illness and subsequent death of the girl were known to all the inmates of the family, to the hired mourners, and probably to the multitude who accompanied Jesus to the house, inasmuch as they, in all likelihood, heard the servant's announcement of her death. Moreover, that she was restored to life and health again could not be hid from any having intercourse with the family. The Saviour's injunction simply implies that they were not officiously

LESSON XVIII.

Christ gives sight to two blind men—Casts out a dumb spirit—Returns to Nazareth—Preaches again throughout Galilee.—MATT. ix. 27-38; xiii. 54-58; MARK vi. 1-6.

MATTHEW ix. 27-34.

AND when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou son of David, have mercy on us.*

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe

to blazon the matter abroad. The reason was, the miracle spake sufficiently for itself. Accordingly Matthew says, "The fame hereof went abroad into all that land," or district of country.

*Reader, the compassion and power of Jesus are here strikingly displayed. The same qualities still prompt him to relieve the necessities of all who call on him in persevering faith:—especially in granting them the knowledge of his favour by the remission of their sins. Art thou in the conscious enjoyment of this blessing?

NOTES ON MATT. ix. 27-34.

Verse 27. *When Jesus departed thence*] Namely, from the house of Jairus, whose daughter he had just restored to life. *Two blind men followed him, crying, Son of David, have mercy on us*] David was the most distinguished of the Jewish kings, and the Messiah, who was to descend from him, (Jer. xxiii. 5,) was commonly called "son of David," both on account of his lineage, and of his glorious character.

Verse 28. *And when he was come into the house*] Most probably Peter's, that being supposed to be the

ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know it.

place of his usual residence when at Capernaum. *The blind men came to him*] Mr. Watson remarks that Jesus permitted these men to follow him in order to try their faith, and that they might be a testimony against the inhabitants by proclaiming him, through the streets, to be the long-expected Messiah. *Believe ye that I am able to do this?*] That is, to restore their sight; for this was the "mercy" they entreated. *They said, Yea, Lord*] "As these men were blind, they must have relied on the testimony of others for the truth of Christ's miracles. Their persuasion of his ability to cure them was highly commendable in them, and reflected great honour on Jesus, as it showed the honesty of their minds, and the truth and notoriety of his miracles." Without faith, says Dr. Clarke, Jesus no more saves men's souls now, than he formerly healed their bodies.

Verse 29. *Then touched he their eyes*] It was our Lord's usual custom to lay his hands on those whom he healed. *According to your faith be it unto you*] This expression is a declaration that because their faith in him was implicit, the cure designed should be perfect.

Verse 30. *Their eyes were opened*] A Hebrew phrase importing "they received their sight." Herein is shown the sincerity of their faith. *Jesus straitly charged them, &c.*] He earnestly *forbade*, or *prohibited* their making the cure known. The charge was strict, but not harsh, or threatening, as some have supposed. We presume

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake : and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of devils.

the Saviour's chief reason for giving this direction was, that the enmity of his opponents might not be needlessly increased, or their guilt enhanced by attributing his works of benevolence to Satanic influence.

Verse 31. *But they spread abroad his fame*] Prompted by the joyousness of their feelings they acted contrary to his directions. Although this conduct was very natural for them, yet we cannot but regard it as improper, obedience to a divine injunction being always safer and more honourable than the uncertain guidance of our own feelings. "Obedience is better than sacrifice."

Verses 32, 33. *As they*] Namely, Jesus and his disciples. *Went out*] From Capernaum. *They*] The inhabitants of the neighbourhood. *Brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil*] "Dumb" means unable to speak. The dumbness was occasioned by the possession, *for when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spake*. It will be borne in mind, that the discourse with the Pharisees and with John's disciples, the healing of the diseased woman, the raising of Jairus' daughter, the giving sight to the two blind men, and probably the casting out of the dumb devil, were all accomplished in one day. Well, then, might the multitude say, *It was never so seen in Israel*.

Verse 34. *The Pharisees said*, their minds being

MARK vi. 1-6.

1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue; and many hearing *him* were

influenced by deeply-rooted prejudice, if not settled malignity, *He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils*] This was said to do away any favourable impression of Jesus which the people generally might otherwise have entertained. For a complete refutation of the slander, see Mark iii. 24-26, and the notes on lesson xii. pp., 135-137.

MARK vi. 1-6.

Verse 1. *And he went out from thence*] From Capernaum, to which place he had returned after healing the Gadarene demoniac, and where he had continued to the present time. *And came into his own country*] Meaning Nazareth, where he had been brought up. Matt. xiii. 55. The city of Nazareth, at present called Nassa, is situated in a deep valley, not on the top of a hill, as some have supposed, but on the side of a hill, nearer its base than its summit. The houses are built of stone, with flat roofs, and in general only one story in height. The streets are steep, owing to the declivity of the hill; narrow, from custom; and dirty, from the looseness of the soil. It contains about two thousand inhabitants, who are chiefly Greek and Roman Christians. A little more than a mile from the town a precipice is pointed out as the place whence the Nazarenes attempted to cast down the Saviour, because he upbraided them for their unbelief. Luke ii. 29. The city is about sixty miles north of Jerusalem.

Verse 2. *He began to teach in the synagogue*] The

astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

term "synagogue," like our word church, originally signified an assembly of people, but at length came to be applied also to the places in which assemblies met, especially where they convened for the worship of God. Its meaning here is a Jewish place of worship. The services prescribed for the Jewish synagogue consisted of prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preaching. These matters were under the direction of three officers, one of whom was the president or ruler, though sometimes this title was extended to the subordinate rulers. These were the officers who gave liberty to preach. Acts xiii. 15. Next to them in office was the "minister" or *angel*, so called, because, as the messenger of the people, he spake to God for them, it being his province to offer up public prayer for the whole congregation. The *chazan* is supposed by some to have been the servant or *sexton* of the synagogue; by others, his office is confounded with that of the "minister."—*Jennings*. By "teaching," in the text, is meant preaching, which followed immediately after the reading of the Scriptures. "In the synagogue," says Godwin, "the scribes ordinarily taught." It is queried by what right Christ and his apostles taught in the synagogues: in answer, Lightfoot observes, that though this liberty was allowed to no illiterate person, but only to the learned, they nevertheless granted it to prophets, workers of miracles, and such as set up for heads and leaders of new sects; probably that they might inform themselves of their doctrines. Under all these characters Christ and his apostles were admitted to this privi-

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

lege. *Whence hath this man these things, &c.*] In this language the Nazarenes express their astonishment at the *wisdom* with which he instructed them, and at the *mighty works*, or miracles, which they had heard were wrought by his hands.

Verse 3. *Is not this the carpenter, &c.*] Tradition has very generally asserted that our Lord had applied himself to this art, and followed it until his entrance on his public ministry, when about thirty years of age. Luke iii. 2, 3. It was a maxim among the Jews that he who taught not his son some useful occupation might as well teach him robbery. "An honest trade," says Dr. A. Clarke, "is no discredit to any man." Idleness, however, is shameful. "It may be fairly collected," says Mr. Watson, "from the manner in which this question was put, and from the other references made by the people of Nazareth to the family of Jesus, that they were in a lowly condition." *And they were offended at him*] "Offended," with us, usually means *displeased*; here, however, it denotes *stumbling at*, or *taking exception to*, a thing. But what was it at which the Nazarenes stumbled? Apparently, the lowly condition of Jesus and his family. Campbell says, The knowledge the Nazarenes possessed of the lowliness of our Lord's birth and education, made them consider him guilty of impious usurpation in assuming the character of a prophet, much more in aspiring to be the Messiah. Thus, while they admitted his wisdom and mighty works, and were astonished at them, they re-

4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.

jected his claim to the Messiahship from the very consideration which ought to have operated strongly in his favour; for being a poor man, whence could he have this wisdom but from God? With respect to the relatives of our Lord, here spoken of, it is uncertain whether they were really his brothers and sisters, or merely his cousins, the term brethren having much greater latitude among the Jews than with us. Mr. Benson says, "By James is meant James the Less, whom Paul calls the Lord's brother, (Gal. i. 19;) Joses or Joseph never was an apostle; Simon is the same who is called the Canaanite, or Zelotes; and Judas or Jude is the author of the epistle that goes under that name, wherein he is styled the brother of James."

Verse 4. *Jesus said, A prophet is not without honour, &c.*] This seems to be a proverbial expression; and implies that a prophet is usually more honoured by strangers than by his own connections and acquaintance, who are apt to become envious at the distinction put on him, and most ready to object to any supposed meanness of birth or circumstances. Christ gave this as a *general* rule—it doubtless has some exceptions, though *he* was not one of them.

Verse 5. *And he could there do no mighty works, save, &c.*] He did perform some cures, but neither so many nor so great as he would have done, had it not been for the unbelief of the people. This shows, we think, that the "mighty works" referred to in verse 2, were miracles wrought in other places, the fame of which

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

MATTHEW ix. 35-38.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel

had reached Nazareth. We are not, however, to suppose that the infidelity of the Nazarenes took away from Christ the power of working miracles; but, 1st. That it exercised such a baneful influence on the minds of the people that not many came to him for relief; and, 2dly. That he *could not* exercise his power among them consistently with the object of his mission, they being in no disposition to yield to the evidence these mighty works gave of the truth of his claims to the Messiahship. From this it would appear that man's agency was in some wise generally considered essential to the performance of any miracle in his favour: in spiritual deliverance we believe it is *always* necessary.

Verse 6. *He marvelled because of their unbelief*] He wondered at their perverseness in rejecting him on such unreasonable grounds as the humbleness of his parentage. *And he went about teaching*] Our Lord, having in vain made this second attempt to win the Nazarenes from their infidelity, and to induce them to receive him as the Messiah, left them, and visited the towns in the neighbourhood, where he probably expected a more favourable reception. "So far as we learn from the gospel history, he never more visited Nazareth."—*Doddridge.*

MATTHEW ix. 35-38.

Verse 35. *Jesus went about all the cities and villages*] Of Galilee, at least of Lower Galilee, in which Nazareth and Capernaum were situated. *Preaching*

of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers *are* few :

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

the gospel] The word "gospel" literally signifies good tidings: and is aptly named in view of its object—the salvation of man.

Verse 36. *When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion*] The word here rendered compassion is of peculiar emphasis, and strikingly depicts the earnest *yearning* which Jesus felt toward the people. *Because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep, &c.*] This figure is taken from pastoral life, and is one of great beauty. It would appear from the language used, that the people eagerly sought to be instructed in "the gospel of the kingdom," and with this view followed Jesus about from place to place. Seeing this, he pitied them, and compared them to sheep neglected by their shepherds, the priests, Levites, and scribes, who ought to have cared for and protected them by instructing them in the knowledge of divine things. But, alas! their pastors "cared not for their souls."

Verse 37. *Then saith he, The harvest truly is plenteous*] A beautiful and instructive figure, drawn from agricultural life. The eager desire manifested by the multitude shows them to have been ripe for instruction; and as a field of "golden grain" calls for the employment of a number of active labourers, that it may be safely garnered, so did their condition call for suitable persons

LESSON XIX.

Christ sends out the twelve apostles—MATT. x. 1-15;
MARK vi. 7-11; LUKE ix. 1-5.

MATTHEW x. 1-15.

AND when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

to instruct them "in the things which made for their peace." *But the labourers are few*] And as it was then, so it is now. The population of the globe is probably not less than ten hundred millions, of whom it is supposed about two hundred millions are nominally Christians; that is, their governments are Christian. Of these again, however, we fear that not more than one in twenty can be accounted righteous before God, although in the United States, and the Protestant countries of Europe, the proportion may be much greater. It is supposed that the public ministers of religion bear the proportion of one in one hundred to real Christians. Compare, then, this one hundred thousand ministers with the ten hundred millions of inhabitants, and it will appear that the labourers are indeed *few*, being only one to every ten thousand. This is an awful thought; well may we pray, Lord, send forth labourers into thy vineyard!

NOTES ON MATT. x. 1-15.

Verse 1. *And when Jesus had called unto him his twelve disciples*] This transaction is not to be confounded with that recorded Luke vi. 12, &c., inasmuch as *that* was simply an ordination to office, while *this* was immediately preparatory to sending them forth to

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

preach. We presume the inducement to this act was the eagerness manifested by the mass of the people to be instructed in the doctrines of Christ, and the necessity which existed for the speedy publication of his mission throughout the country. *He gave them power against unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of sickness*] That is, the power to work miracles, which they had not hitherto possessed. This power continued with the church some time after our Lord's ascension, though it is not certain how long. The delegation of such a power to man by Jesus Christ proves his divinity. Evil spirits or demons are here denominated "unclean," because they are wicked, and delight in wickedness, which is the only pollution of a spiritual being.

Verses 2-4. *The apostles are these, &c.*] The word apostle literally imports *a messenger—one sent*; hence it is sometimes applied to a herald or an ambassador: but it is almost always used in the New Testament to denote *persons employed to convey the message of salvation from God to man*; especially the *twelve* and *Paul*. "It is," says Mr. Watson, "a word of dignity, but only according to the character of the sender, the message, and the person sent." In the highest sense it is applied to Christ himself, (Heb. iii. 1,) because he was sent to be the Saviour of the world. For a fuller exposition of

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

these verses, see note on Luke vi. 13-16, pp. 8, 9, of this volume.

Verse 5. *These twelve Jesus sent forth*] In companies of two each. Mark vi. 7. "Men more influential for their rank, and more eminent for learning, our Lord might have called: but plain integrity and honest simplicity were the qualifications which Christ sought. In fact, all that was in the first instance wanted was men of character, to state facts; men of simplicity, to report the doctrines they had been taught, and as they had been delivered to them; and men of holy courage, willing to suffer and die for the truth. One, indeed, and only one, proved false; but happily for the world he betrayed his Master before he could betray his cause, to the establishment of which his treachery was made signally subservient."—*Watson*. *And commanded, Go not into the way of the Gentiles*] By "way" of the Gentiles some suppose the road leading to Gentile nations to be intended; that is, they were not yet to go among the heathen and offer them the gospel; but if they met with such individuals settled in Jewish cities, &c., they were not prohibited doing good to them. *Into any city of the Samaritans enter not*] That is, to preach. From the position of Samaria, however, it lying between the northern and southern portions of the Holy Land, they would doubtless be frequently obliged to enter its territories.

Verse 6. *Go to the lost sheep of Israel*] The relation existing between Christ and his church is frequently exhibited under the notion of a shepherd and his flock.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The Jews were termed "lost sheep" because they wandered from God, obeying the traditions of men rather than his requirements. The reason of Christ's forbidding his apostles to enter Gentile or Samaritan cities we conceive to be, that "Christianity was to be built upon the foundation of the Old Testament, as the same dispensation perfected. No people but the Jews had been placed in a course of training to receive it; and either the Jews, who held the prophecies of this new dispensation, must be convinced of the truth of Christ's claims and doctrines, or be reasonably silenced by appeals to what they held sacred, before Christianity could be proposed to any other nation with hopes of success." Besides, the gospel system was as yet incomplete, "wanting the facts of the great sacrifice, the resurrection, the ascension, and the priesthood of its Founder, by all which many important prophecies were yet to be accomplished; and the time, therefore, was not come for its being propounded to Gentile nations."—*Watson*. The difference between Jews and Samaritans in point of religion may be reduced to three heads: 1st. That the Samaritans considered the temple which *had* existed on Gerizim (for we believe it was now in ruins) the proper place for the worship of God: 2d. That they received, as of divine authority, no other Scriptures than the five books of Moses: 3d. That their worship had some mixture of paganism. The Jews considered them as corrupters of the true faith, and bore a great aversion to them.

Verse 7. *As ye go, preach, &c.*] Literally, *proclaim*, as does a herald. "Probably," says Doddridge, "they were to make this proclamation with a loud voice, as

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils : freely ye have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses ;

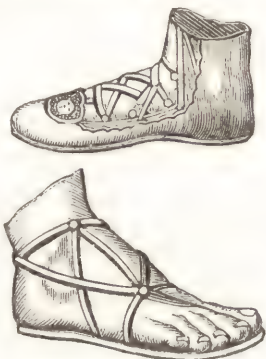
they passed through the streets of the towns they went to, as Jonah delivered his message to Nineveh." *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*] *The reign of heaven hath approached.* "Properly speaking, the kingdom of heaven, or gospel dispensation, did not begin till the Jewish dispensation was abolished, and therefore the apostles in our Lord's time, and even Jesus Christ himself, preached the *approach* only, and not the actual existence of that kingdom."—*Macknight*.

Verse 8. *Heal, &c.*] They were empowered and directed to work these miracles in confirmation of the truth of their message. *Freely ye have received, freely give*] That this clause does not relate to the stated duties of ministers of religion, or require them to serve for naught, is evident from verse 10, and from Luke x. 7. It has reference only to the *extraordinary* powers with which they were endued, and which they were not to pervert to purposes of private gain.

Verses 9, 10. *Provide neither gold, silver, nor brass*] They were to make no provision for their journey, but trust the supply of their wants to the providence of God. By "brass," coins of small value are probably meant. The gold and silver coins mostly used among the Jews were, of gold, the sextula, worth about two dollars and a half, and the shekel, value eight dollars; of silver, the shekel, fifty cents, and the half shekel, twenty-five cents. *Purses*] Rather, *girdles*. The Easterns keep sundry articles for present use, including money, in the folds of the outer girdle, but larger sums they frequently sew

10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: (for the workman is worthy of his meat.)

up in a girdle which they wear next their skins.—*Pict. Bible.* *Scrip*] A bag or wallet in which provisions are carried. It is usually made of hair cloth or worsted. There were no inns or other places of entertainment in the East, as there are with us, and therefore travellers provided themselves with a sufficiency of food for their journey, or to last them from one prominent place on their route to another. It is probable that the “scrip” is put for the provisions themselves. *Neither two coats*] For a description of this article of clothing see note on Matt. v. 40, p. 37. *Neither shoes*] By referring to Mark vi. 9, we perceive they were to be “shod with sandals;”



though of these they were to have but one pair. “Sandals” were wooden or leathern soles, fastened to the foot with straps. “Shoes” were “a kind of short boots, reaching a little way up the leg.” Mr. Horne says, “In

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

those hot countries the inhabitants ordinarily wore sandals, or went barefoot; but in travelling, they used shoes." "At the present day the shoes generally used in the East remain something between a complete shoe and a sandal."—*Pictorial Bible*. Nor yet staves] But they might take a staff. Mark vi. 8. Oriental travellers, when journeying on foot, seem to have considered a staff an almost indispensable article: indeed, it would appear that they frequently carried *two*, one to walk with, or as a weapon of defence, and the other to suspend their provision bag on. "We have often, in the East," remarks an oriental traveller, "met men travelling on foot, with a walking stick in one hand, while another stick, held over the shoulder, supported the scrip or wallet." As the apostles were to carry no provisions, it is evident that a second staff would not be necessary. *The workman is worthy of his meat*] This is generally explained of the reasonable expectation they might have of being supplied with necessities by those whom they benefited; but it seems rather to be a promise that those labourers sent forth by Christ should, through the providence of God, be supplied with what was needful to their maintenance.—Holden.

Verse 11. *Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter*] Whatsoever Jewish town. *Inquire who in it is worthy*] The word rendered "worthy" implies, either a person of moral worth, or of easy circumstances and bountiful disposition. Perhaps both ideas were embraced in our Lord's mind. *There abide till ye go thence*] That is, till ye go from that place. "Abide" here means, re

12 And when ye come into a house, salute it.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

main, stay: they were not to go from house to house in search of better accommodations, but contentedly to receive the hospitality offered. "All this," says Mr. Ward, "is perfectly natural to a Hindoo. It is the custom of a stranger to go to a house, and as he enters it to say, 'Sir, I am a guest with you to-night.' If the person cannot receive him, he apologizes to the stranger." The same author remarks that it would be considered a great offence if a guest, after being made welcome at a house, were to leave it and go to another.

Verse 12. *When ye come into a house, salute it*] "House" here has the sense of *family*, as is the case Matt. xii. 25; John iv. 53. What the salutation to be used was, we learn from Luke x. 5, "Peace to this house." Dr. A. Clarke states that among the Jews all spiritual and temporal blessings were included in the term "peace:" hence their rabbins say, "Great is peace, for all other blessings are comprehended in it." Religion is not unfriendly to good manners; but calls on all its votaries to pay proper attention to the forms of external civility: from the next verse, however, we infer that something more than the usual forms of good breeding were had in view by Christ.

Verse 13. *If the house be worthy*] The meaning is, if the family be benevolent, and in the exercise of charity receive you. *Let your peace come upon it*] Or, rather, as St. Luke, the desired blessing *shall come*, &c. *But if not worthy*] If, from a principle of opposition to your Master or your message, they do not receive you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Let your peace return to you] This is a Hebrew mode of saying that their "peace" should not come upon it: but the blessing should, in this instance, become void and ineffectual, being rendered so by the inhospitality of the family. In the language of Dr. A. Clarke, "They shall get nothing, but you shall have an increase. The trials, disappointments, insults, and wants of the followers of Christ become, in the hands of the all-wise God, subservient to their best interests: hence nothing can happen to them without their deriving profit from it, unless through their own fault." The sentiment contained in this verse is repeated at the close of the instructions given to the twelve: see verse 42.

Verse 11. *Shake off the dust of your feet]* Mark adds, "for a testimony against them." The Jews entertained very high notions of the exclusive sanctity of their own land, esteeming the very dust thereof to be holy, while they regarded every other part of the world as profane and polluted. Hence they were accustomed, on their arrival in Judea from any place without its limits, to rub off the dust from their shoes lest their inheritance should be defiled.—*Lightfoot*. It is supposed that there was an allusion to this custom in the injunction of Christ, and that by the symbolical act of "shaking off the dust from their feet," the apostles declared they considered those against whom this act was performed as heathen people. "Testimony," in this verse, means *evidence, a token*. It is recorded, Acts xiii. 51, and xviii. 6, that the apostles had recourse to this action in some instances. By this public act the offending individuals were remind-

15 Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.

ed of their fault and its consequences; and we presume that if, penitent for their error, they changed their conduct, the blessing which had been invoked would be ratified in their favour.

Verse 15. *Verily*] Truly, certainly. *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah*] These cities were situated in the southern part of Canaan, in what was then known as the "plain of the Jordan," or, perhaps, more properly, "the vale of Siddim." The country was delightful, being, according to the sacred historian, "even as the garden of the Lord." The inhabitants, however, "were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly;" (Gen. xiii. 13;) and in consequence these places, together with the neighbouring cities of Admah and Zeboiim, were "overthrown by fire from the Lord out of heaven." Gen xix. 24, 25. The southern part of the Dead Sea is supposed to occupy the site of these cities. The "judgment" referred to is most probably the final judgment, as no other could at that day await Sodom and Gomorrah. By its being "more tolerable" for those cities than for the rejecters of Christ, we understand that their future punishment will be less severe.

LESSON XX.

Christ's instructions to the twelve prior to their being sent out to preach, (continued.) MATT. x. 16-42, and xi. 1; MARK vi. 12, 13; LUKE ix. 6.

MATT. x. 16-42; xi. 1.

BEHOLD, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

NOTES ON MATT. x. 16-42, and xi. 1.

Verse 16. *As sheep in the midst of wolves*] The sheep, from the mildness and harmlessness of its nature, has become the emblem of meekness; the wolf, on the contrary, owing to its rapacity and cruel disposition, is the symbol of mischief and violence. Macknight suggests that the apostles probably felt elated at the miraculous powers with which they were endued by their Master, supposing that the people would everywhere receive them with marked attention and honour. To remove this false impression, the Saviour makes them acquainted with the real danger of their mission: and surely no fitter illustration could be found than that used. From an examination of Acts v. 40, 41; vii. 59, 60; xxiii. 12, we shall see how correctly Jesus judged. *Wise as serpents*] Serpents have ever been regarded as remarkable for their prudence and cunning; hence they became emblematic of wisdom. Some of the serpent tribe are also noted for malignity. *Harmless as doves*] The "dove" is the well-known emblem of peace, fidelity, and gentleness. Our Lord's wish seems to have been that his disciples should imitate the serpent in the readiness with which it avoids danger, but, lest their prudence should degenerate into craftiness, they were also to pat-

17 But beware of men : for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues ;

tern after the fidelity, straightforwardness, and gentleness of the dove. By "simple" in the margin, and "harmless" in the text, we understand a *single, straightforward, undisguised* state of mind to be intended. It will thus appear that the apostles were to be prudent in avoiding danger or persecution : but yet firm and faithful in the execution of their mission. In cases, therefore, where the honour of their Master and the interests of the souls of men required them to suffer rather than to flee, they were to abide the storm ; yet when they might honourably and safely avoid danger, being "persecuted in one city, they would flee unto another."

Verse 17. *Beware of men*] It is supposed by many commentators that Christ here cautions the apostles to be especially on their guard against that class of their countrymen likened, in verse 16, to "wolves." *They will deliver you up to the councils*] "The councils here mentioned," says Mr. Watson, "are the courts attached to each synagogue." We rather understand the term to signify any of the judicial tribunals. Acts v. 27, &c. *And scourge you in their synagogues*] "Scourging" or whipping, is a punishment frequently alluded to in the Scriptures ; and was the most common corporeal punishment of the Jews. From Deut. xxv. 2, it appears that anciently the criminal used to lie down while the blows were inflicted ; but more recently it was customary to cause him to lean slightly forward, and to fasten his hands to a low post in front of him, while the blows were usually given on the back, the offender being stripped to the waist. The instrument made use

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

of was sometimes a rod or twig, and sometimes a whip, generally with three lashes. Occasionally pieces of iron, lead, or bone were tied on various parts of the lashes, when the implement was called a *scorpion*. A knowledge of this fact makes plain the import of Rehoboam's threat to the Israelites. 2 Chron. x. 14. The law of Moses restricted the number of stripes to forty, (Deut. xxv. 2, 3,) and in order to guard against exceeding the allotted number, it was usual to inflict but thirty-nine. 2 Cor. xi. 24. When a three-lashed whip was used, therefore, but thirteen blows were given, as three stripes were made at each blow. Among the Romans the number of blows was regulated by the discretion of the magistrate. It is generally allowed that scourging was frequently administered in the synagogue—that is, in the place set apart for divine worship; (Matt. xxiii. 34; Acts xxii. 19;) and it is said that the scourging was performed by the chazan, or servant (answering to our sexton) of the synagogue: some critics, however, availing themselves of the double import of the term synagogue, contend that in such cases the idea of assembly, or court, ought to prevail, and not that of a place of religious adoration.

Verse 18. *Ye shall be brought before governors and kings*] For trial and punishment. Several of the apostles were, as we learn from sacred and profane history, arraigned by their malicious enemies before the public authorities; for instance, before Felix, Festus, Gallio, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, &c. From this, as well as some other declarations in this communication, it is

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

evident that our Lord did not confine himself to what should befall the apostles during the temporary mission on which he was now about to send them; nor, indeed, are his remarks to be understood as applying to the twelve merely, but to those also who should unite with or succeed them in their work. *For my sake*] Here was their alleged crime;—they preached “Christ and the resurrection,” in opposition to the superstitious notions of the heathen, and the legal rites and ceremonies of the Jews. *For a testimony against them, &c.*] “Rather,” says Holden, “for a *testimony*, or *witness*, unto them; that is, that by this means ye may bear testimony in favour of the gospel, [by explaining, defending, and enforcing its doctrines,] both to the Jews and Gentiles.” The mildness and firmness of the early Christians under their sufferings were frequently a means of carrying conviction of the truth of their views to the minds of their bigoted persecutors.

Verse 19. *When they*] Your persecutors. *Deliver you up*] Accusing you with the utmost virulence before these “governors and kings.” *Take no thought how or what ye shall speak*] That is, be not anxiously careful, because such anxiety argues distrust in God, and infallibly produces a confused mind.—*Clarke. It shall be given you in that same hour, &c.*] The supposed cause of their “being delivered up,” &c., seems to be to answer for their faith, and their reasons for proclaiming their belief to others. “No new revelations are here promised, but simply that they should have the power to give a clear, convincing, energetic statement of what

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child : and the children shall

had been already revealed." No more seems to be intended than that help which every Christian may expect to receive when called, in difficult circumstances, "to give a reason of the hope that is in him;" and especially which every Christian minister should constantly look for in his great work of preaching the gospel. Such, however, as think that the divine influence here promised supersedes the necessity of study and application on the part of man, are as manifestly in error as would be the person who should suppose that because God has promised to his children that "bread shall be given them, and their water sure," there is consequently no need of exertion on their part. We believe, with the adage, that "God helps those who help themselves."

Verse 20. *It is not ye that speak*] The meaning is, It shall not be *so much ye*, &c. He who "made man's mouth" to be his instrument, is still "with the mouth" of his faithful servants.

Verse 21. *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death*, &c.] "These words intimate that hatred on account of difference in religious opinion should sever the tenderest bonds of natural affection. Yet who but He 'that knew what was in man' could have so accurately traced this repulsive feature in the history of religious persecutions; for that persecution 'for righteousness' sake,' which, since Christianity was introduced into the world has been practised in almost every age by Jews, pagans, and hypocritical Christians, and in which the highest degree of truth and holiness produced the most

rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake : but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

diabolical enmity, had no parallel in the ancient world."

—*Watson*. But why was this? We think but one answer can be given, and that is strongly affirmative of the superiority of Christianity over every other faith which has existed in the world, viz., the higher tone of its morals, and its open and constant condemnation of wickedness, especially of idolatry. In the persecutions to which the early Christians were exposed, every refinement of cruelty which human ingenuity and diabolical malice could suggest was brought into operation. "Some were impaled alive; others had their limbs broken, and in that condition were left to expire; some were roasted by slow fires, occasionally with the head downward; some had melted lead poured down their throats; the flesh of some was torn off with shells; some were wrapped in garments dipped in pitch, and burned by night in the gardens of Nero." And but little, if at all inferior, were the persecutions of the Waldenses and others by the Church of Rome. Shame! The criminality of this conduct is chargeable, of course, to those whose depraved and malicious passions originated or executed these deeds of violence; and a fearful account they must give!

Verse 22. *Ye shall be hated of all men*] Rather, by the generality of men. *For my name's sake*] For your attachment to me and to my cause. The pagans required Christians who were brought before their tribunals on account of their religion to curse the name of Christ, doing which, they were released from punishment. *But*

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.

he that endureth to the end] To "endure," here, is to *hold out—to persevere*. The "end" is the termination of the natural life of each individual, not the end of the Jewish polity, as some erroneously suppose. *Shall be saved*] From eternal wrath, to which those would be exposed who "made shipwreck of faith," and returned to their former evil courses. The assurance of future felicity was doubtless needed to encourage the apostles and their followers to "endure the great fight of afflictions" which the Saviour had predicted, while the very fact that those afflictions were foretold, would strengthen them under their trials.

Verse 23. *When they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another*] To "persecute" is to *pursue with intent to injure*. *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel*] Margin, *end* or *finish*. Ye shall not have fully accomplished your mission. *Till the Son of man be come*] Various opinions have been given on this passage. Some refer the "coming," &c., to the resurrection and ascension of our blessed Lord; others understand by it the effusion of the Spirit on the day of pentecost; but the majority of modern commentators apply the phrase to the subversion of the Jewish nation, by the destruction of Jerusalem. The object of the declaration was to quicken the apostles to a zealous itinerancy through all the cities of Israel, by intimating that the judgment of that people could not long be delayed. There was no time to be lost in disputing with the incorrigibly obstinate; when, therefore, "they were per-

24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord: if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

secuted in one city, they were to flee to another," in order to save some. The objection that many years elapsed between this time and the destruction of Jerusalem does not affect this view, for the Saviour did not intend a hasty visit to each, but those laborious efforts which they were to make to save as many of the nation as possible from the impending ruin: and forty years was but a short time for them to pursue such labours amid prejudice, calumny, and persecution, so as to discharge their consciences as to every city, town, and village in Judea; to render all inexcusable, and to train up, out of so corrupt a mass, those numerous though small Hebrew churches which by their instrumentality were in fact raised up.—*Watson*.

Verses 24, 25. *The disciple is not above his master, &c.*] By "master" and "lord" the Saviour is intended; "disciple" and "servant" point out his followers. The saying is proverbial, and imports that a servant cannot expect better treatment than his master. *If they have called the master Beelzebub*] This they had in fact done by accusing him of being leagued with Satan, to whom they frequently applied this obnoxious title. Matt. xii. 23; John viii. 48. For the definition of Beelzebub see page 135. *How much more, &c.*] This does not refer to the quantity of reproach and persecution (for in this the servant cannot be above his lord,) but to the certainty of it.—*Wesley*.

26 Fear them not, therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the house-tops.

Verse 26. *There is nothing covered, &c.*] A proverbial expression denoting that truth cannot be extinguished. "As Jesus had just alluded to the gross and malicious slanders with which his disciples should be assailed, it is most natural to refer these words to that ultimate justification of their characters and motives which divine Providence would bring about. For a time obloquy 'covered' and 'hid' the faith, charity, and purity of the first preachers of the gospel, and in place of these virtues the worst motives were attributed to them; but what was thus *covered* and *hidden* has been revealed, and now their 'righteousness shines forth bright as the sun.'"—*Watson*. The exposition will, we think, hold good of all the disciples of Christ, if they continue to act as becometh those who are "followers of that which is good."

Verse 27. *What I tell you in darkness, &c.*] "Darkness" here means *privacy*: and "light" *publicity*. *What ye hear in the ear, proclaim on the house-tops*] There seems to be allusion here to a custom which is said to have prevailed among the Jews after the return from the Babylonish captivity, when the Hebrew language was no longer spoken by the common people. The Scripture was publicly read in the original, but the doctor of the law whispered the meaning in the ear of an interpreter, who publicly proclaimed what was communicated to him. The houses of the Jews had flat

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

roofs, and from thence public proclamations were generally made. The meaning of the passage is, therefore, that those instructions which Christ had privately given them were by them to be made public, for the benefit of the people.

Verse 28. *Fear not them which kill the body*] The "governors and kings" before alluded to. This is added as the strongest reason for their persevering to proclaim the gospel. *Not able to kill the soul*] Thus our Lord at once declares the soul's immateriality and immortality, and its conscious existence separate from the body; for if by the death of the body the soul were deprived of perception and thought, of activity and enjoyment, though all these should be restored at the last day, it would be as truly killed as the body, which also, at the resurrection, shall have its life, sensation, and activity more perfectly restored.

"The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its Sire,
Shall never die."

Fear him which is able to destroy both in hell] The word rendered "destroy" does not mean that bad men will be annihilated; (for terrible as is that thought, "it were a consummation devoutly to be wished," by many of them;) the word is often used to express continuance in misery, as we sometimes say of an exceedingly vicious man, "he is lost;" meaning, lost or dead to all sense of propriety and happiness. This text assures us that both the body and the soul of finally wicked persons will

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

suffer the torments of future punishment. See also Dan. xii. 2, and John v. 28, 29.

Verses 29, 30. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?*] This illustration is designed to manifest the *particular* providence of God. The apostles (and all other faithful followers, and especially *ministers* of Christ, have a right to the same encouragements and promises) had just been encouraged to the diligent and faithful performance of the duty of proclaiming the gospel by the consideration that their opponents could not, in the exercise of their greatest wrath, do more than kill the body—the soul was beyond their reach; they are now further taught that even this limited power could not be exerted without the knowledge and permission of God. The word rendered “sparrow” meant with the Jews any clean bird; the meaning, therefore, is, “Are not two [small] *birds* sold for a farthing?” The *assarium*, here rendered “farthing,” is equal to about one cent and a half of our currency. *One of them shall not fall, &c.*] Although these birds were of so little value, yet so minute and universal is the providence of God, that nothing to which he has given life dies but by his permission. *The hairs of your head are numbered*] This seems to have been a proverbial expression denoting that God’s care is over all his creatures.

Verse 31. *Ye are of more value than many sparrows*] In this illustration we have the doctrine of a particular providence strongly asserted and beautifully exemplified.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Thus it appears that in one sense the poet spoke not truly when he said of Deity,—

—————“ the Universal Cause
Acts not by *partial* but by *general* laws :
He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall
Systems or atoms into nothing hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.”

The condescension of the Divine Being often meets, however, with strong opposition from the unrenewed man; the thought that “He who fills immensity with his presence” should mark our isolated wants and acts, argues a minuteness of inspection which, while it affords sweet consolation to the man of God, disagreeably affects the servant of sin. And why?—*Because his ways are evil!*

Verse 32. *Whosoever shall confess me before men*] To “confess” Christ is openly to profess faith in him, as the Messiah—the Saviour of men. It also implies the public practice of the rules and ordinances of his religion. *Him will I confess before my Father*] In this place “confess” has the sense of *approve*; as though Christ had said, Him will I own and approve as my servant and friend, both at the judgment bar, and in glory.

Verse 33. *Whosoever shall deny me, &c.*] To “deny” means to *reject* Christ’s claims—to *refuse* submission to him. *Him will I deny*] Renounce—cast off. How awful!

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me : and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.

Verses 34-36. *Think not that I am come to send peace*] We believe "peace" is here to be taken in its usual acceptation of *concord, agreement*. *But a sword*] By "sword" we understand *dissension, strife, &c.*, of which "the sword" is an apt emblem. *I am come to set a man at variance against his father, &c.*] It is usual with the Easterns to express the *certainty* of the foreseen consequences of any measure by representing it as the *purpose* for which the measure was adopted. That strife was the consequence of Christ's coming, we learn from the history of the first planting of Christianity. The Saviour refers, therefore, in this whole passage, to the *result*, not to the *object* of his coming, which it had been declared by angels was, to bring glory to God, peace on earth, and good will to man. As the religion of Jesus is one of pure benevolence and charity, we can ascribe the results here spoken of only to the depraved passions of men, acted on, in many cases, doubtless, by diabolic agency.

Verses 37, 38. *Loveth father, mother, &c., more than me*] And for the sake of love to them, or through fear of their opposition, denies my cause. Thus this verse connects with the preceding. *Is not worthy of me*] Not deserving of having Christ for his master or

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.

of being accounted his disciple, or of sharing his glory. The meaning is, Shall not be, &c. *And he that taketh not his cross*] The leading idea of this phrase is submission to suffering for the truth's sake. There is allusion here to the custom of the Romans of compelling criminals who were to be crucified to bear the transverse part of the cross on which they were to suffer to the place of execution. But it is also generally allowed that in these words Jesus alludes to the manner of his own death, (John xix. 17;) and also declares that every one who is not willing to follow him in this respect, that is, to die for the truth, is not worthy of being his disciple. The "cross," therefore, stands for death in its most ignominious and fearful form; it also embraces the minor sufferings to be endured for the truth: but it is ridiculous to apply the phrase of "bearing the cross," as is often done, to some slight mortification of our will, or to some duty not quite agreeable to our views and feelings.

Verse 39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it, &c.*] Campbell remarks, There is in this sentence a kind of paronomasia, [or play on words,] whereby the same word is used in different senses, in such a manner as to convey the sentiment with greater energy. The original word rendered "life" is equivocal, signifying both *life* and *soul*, and consequently is much better fitted for exhibiting with clearness the two meanings than the English word *life*. We have a similar form of speech in "Let the dead bury the dead." The meaning is, He that saves his life by denying me, shall lose it eternally; and

40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that

he that loseth his life by confessing me, shall save it eternally. We are informed that when the heathen judges would persuade a Christian to renounce his faith, they made use of such terms as these—"Save your life ;" "Do not throw away your life." Horne, however, reads the passage, *He that findeth, &c.*, "He that expects to save his life by apostacy shall lose it."

Verse 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*] "The Greek denotes *to receive hospitably, to entertain* ; and also, *to receive doctrines, to embrace and admit them.*" From the following verses it would appear that the former sense is intended. The meaning then is, He who kindly entertains you does in effect entertain me, since the treatment shown to an ambassador is in fact shown to the power he represents. It was a common saying among the Jews, "He that receiveth a learned man, [meaning thereby a teacher of the law,] receiveth the Shechinah." Our Lord therefore in this, as in numerous other passages, which from inattention to the sayings of the ancient Jews are unnoticed, claims those honours which were assigned by the people to the Angel Jehovah, the God of their fathers.—*Townsend.* *He that receiveth me receiveth, &c.*] He who entertains me does in fact entertain God himself : that is, God accounts it as being done unto himself.

Verses 41, 42. *He that receiveth a prophet*] *A teacher*, such being evidently the import of the word in this place. *In the name of a prophet*] *Because* he is such—out of regard to his office. *Shall receive a prophet's reward*]

receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold *water* only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

A reward proportioned to the office of him who is entertained. "There is here," says Mr. Watson, "allusion to the benefits conferred on several persons who received the prophets in ancient times; for instance, the hostess of Elijah, whose meal and oil failed not until the famine ceased." *A little one*] A private Christian; a *disciple*, in opposition to *teacher*. So ready were the primitive Christians to discharge the duties of hospitality, that the very heathen admired them for it: and while they exercised this virtue toward all strangers, they were specially attentive to those of the same faith with themselves. Believers scarcely ever travelled without letters of recommendation, which testified the purity of their faith, and procured a hospitable reception wherever Christians were found. *A cup of cold water, &c.*] In the warm and arid countries of the East water was more highly prized than with us. In Hindostan the inhabitants sometimes boil it, that the heated traveller may not be injured by it, and set a jar of it under some spreading tree. We know not, however, that this practice was ever adopted by the Jews: and therefore understand the expression to be proverbial for giving the smallest thing. Some refer the rewards promised to the present life, others to the future: probably both may be designed. We learn from the passage, that works of benevolence are pleasing to and rewardable by God, if done from proper motives.

Having finished these instructions, Christ sent forth

LESSON XXI.

Death of John the Baptist.—MATT. xiv. 1-14; MARK vi. 14-34; LUKE ix. 7-11; JOHN vi. 1-15.

MARK vi. 14-34.

AND King Herod heard of him, (for his name was spread abroad,) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

the apostles to their work : the success which attended their mission is recorded Mark vi. 13: "*They cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.*" Oil (which in the countries of the east and south is of a peculiarly mild quality) was used by the ancients, both Jews and Gentiles, as a medical application. It is evident, however, that the apostles did not so use it, for these "healings" are as plainly miraculous as are the dispossessions. It was used symbolically, as an emblem of that peace, comfort, and joy, which would result to those who were healed in a moment of whatsoever disease they had. "Anointing" is still used by the Romish Church, though neither as a means of restoration to health, so far as we can see, for it is only employed when the individual is presumed to be near death, nor as a symbol of gladness. They have, therefore, no Scriptural warrant for their usage. The Romanists term this rite *extreme unction*, and class it among their seven sacraments.

NOTES ON MARK vi. 14-34.

Verse 14. *And King Herod*] The Herod here named is Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, the youngest son of Herod the Great. The titles "king" and "tetrarch" are applied to him indifferently; compare Matt. xiv. 1, 9.

15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead.

17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife : for he had married her.

Heard of him] Of Jesus. Luke (ix. 7) adds, "and he was perplexed," apparently because of the discordant opinions which prevailed among his household as to whom Jesus really was. Mr. Watson supposes that "accounts of Christ's character and miracles must have been previously heard at court, but probably passed for idle or superstitious tales; now they could no longer escape attention."

Verse 16. *Herod said, It is John]* John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded. From Matt. xiv. 2, it appears that Herod expressed this opinion to his "servants" or courtiers. It is supposed that Herod was a Sadducee, and, if so, denied the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead: if he was, however, the accusations of his conscience troubled him, and in the misgivings of the moment belied his creed. Thus

"Conscience does make cowards of us all."

His anxiety on the subject was so great that he "desired to see Jesus," (Luke ix. 9,) probably that he might satisfy himself as to the supposed identity of the Saviour and John.

Verses 17, 18. *For Herod had bound him in prison]* The transactions here noticed took place some months before John's death : as it is commonly supposed that he lay in prison from a year to eighteen months. *For Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife, &c.]* This princess was a granddaughter of Herod the Great, and

18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him ; but she could not :

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just

had married Herod Philip, a son of her grandfather and Mariamne ; Herod Philip was therefore her uncle.* Some time after her marriage, her uncle Herod Antipas induced her to leave her husband, by whom she had had one child, (the Salome hereafter mentioned,) and to become his wife : he at the same time divorcing his former wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, in order to make room for Herodias. *John had said, It is not lawful for thee, &c.*] For a man to take the wife of another, during the lifetime of her husband, (and that husband his brother,) was a most flagitious crime. This infamous couple were guilty both of incest and adultery, and therefore richly deserved the reproof which the courageous Baptist administered.

Verse 19. *Therefore Herodias had a quarrel, &c.*] Rather, indulged an *inward grudge* against John. *And would have killed him, &c.*] Would have prevailed on Herod to do it. Matt. xiv. 5.

Verse 20. *Herod feared John*] Stood in awe of and revered him. *And observed him*] The marginal reading is, "*kept him, or saved him :*" namely, either from

* This Philip, or Herod Philip, must not be confounded with his half-brother of the same name, mentioned by Luke as "tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis." This one never held any government. He was at one time set down in his father's will as heir to the kingdom of Judea ; but the will was changed in consequence of Mariamne, Philip's mother, having fallen under the displeasure of her husband.

man and a holy, and observed him ; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee ;

the vengeance of Herodias, or from the persecutions of others : and many critics understand this to be the true import of the original. Yet Matthew says, he would have killed him, had he not "feared the people." *Did many things, &c.*] Many things which John suggested, but he did *not* do the thing specially required—restore Herodias to her rightful husband. How many persons resemble Herod in this particular:—they attend to many things which the gospel enjoins, particularly when the doing of these things does not interfere with their own wishes ; but they will not do *all* that it requires, and therefore miss of salvation.

Verse 21. *And when a convenient day was come*] Either "convenient"—that is, opportune, suitable—for insidiously working on the mind of Herod to put John to death ; or, as being a festival day, a *holiday*, affording a favourable opportunity for presenting a petition to that effect. *Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, &c.*] Commentators are not decided whether this feast was held in commemoration of Herod's birth, or of his obtaining the government of Galilee ; though most of them lean to the former opinion. Both occasions would probably be signalized with expressions of joy, according to the custom of both Jews and heathen. His officers, civil and military, are represented by the titles given. The orientals have nearly all their great feasts in the evening ; which are represented as having a very imposing effect.

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Verse 22. *The daughter of Herodias came in and danced*] This girl, whose name was Salome, was the daughter of Philip and Herodias. As Jewish females did not generally take part in the public entertainments of the men, but had their festivities among themselves, we must suppose that this step was taken at the suggestion of Herodias, and designed as a marked compliment to Herod and his guests: and probably in the expectation of producing the result which followed.

Verse 23. *He sware unto her, &c.*] Rash promises sealed with oaths were often made by the princes and great men of antiquity; we presume to display their munificence, and gain them credit.

Verse 24. *She went forth, &c.*] To ask counsel of her mother as to what her request should be; who directed her to require the head of John. This shows Herodias to have been a very revengeful, malicious woman. Perhaps our young readers may wish to know whether her mother's command was pleasing to Salome? It is supposed that it was not; for the word used by Matthew to express the effect of her mother's direction denotes that she had at first to *urge* and *excite* her to the performance of her request. But ought Salome to have yielded to her mother's injunction? We think she ought not; for God never designed that the *unlawful* commands of parents should be binding on their children.

25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me, by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

Verse 25. *She came in with haste, &c.*] The word rendered "haste" implies, also, *eagerness*; and many learned men think such is its import here. Salome, then, at length, eagerly embraced her mother's wish; being probably instigated thereto by a mistaken sense of family honour, or necessity. *Charger*] A broad or flat plate or dish. The original word strictly means a *pine board*; but it is also used to express any vessel made flat like a board. In Luke xi. 39 it is rendered "platter." It was customary with the princes of the East to require the heads of those whom they ordered to be decapitated to be brought to them, that they might satisfy themselves of the fulfilment of their command. Dr. Walsh informs us, in his *Travels in Turkey*, that the head of the celebrated Ali Pacha, after being cut off and sent to Constantinople, was publicly exhibited on a *dish*.

Verses 26-28. Herod *was exceeding sorry*] To hear her request. Bloomfield remarks that "the word might be rendered *chagrined*. The feeling was doubtless a mixed one; *sorrow*, (on his own account, chiefly,) and *chagrin*, not without *anger*, at being thus taken advantage of; and even *fear*, for he could not but feel apprehensive of the consequences of so unpopular an action." *Yet for his oath's sake*] The original uses the plural form—his *oaths*' sake: he had probably sworn it a number of times. But ought Herod to have been governed by his oath? Certainly not: for in so doing he violated a superior and prior law, the law of

27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison;

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

God, which bound him not to commit murder. *And for their sakes which sat at meat with him*] Here is the true cause, we think, of Herod's compliance: he was *ashamed* to retract before his guests. So true it is that the fear of man bringeth a snare. How many youth have been turned from the path of virtue and drawn into a vortex of guilt and infamy through not having sufficient resolution to resist a sentiment of false shame, or of false honour. *The king sent an executioner*] One of his body guard. These troops were entrusted with the performance of certain confidential duties, and among others that of acting, like the Turkish soldiers of the present day, as executioners of those who had rendered themselves offensive to the reigning authorities. *He beheaded him in the prison*] Josephus says that John was beheaded in the prison of Macherus, a place about two days' journey east of Tiberias, Herod's usual residence.

Verse 29. *When his disciples heard of it*] When John's followers heard of his death. *They came and took up his corpse, &c.*] The head being in the possession of Herodias, who, according to Jerome, drew out the tongue and thrust it through with a bodkin. It is stated by several commentators, we think on the authority of Nicephorus, that the body was thrown over the castle walls, whence the disciples took it and interred it in a suitable manner. "The gospels do not say where John was buried; but in the time of Julian the

Apostate his tomb was shown at Samaria, where the inhabitants opened it, and burned part of his bones; the rest were saved by some Christians, who carried them to an abbot of Jerusalem named Philip."—*Robinson's Calmet*. Having entombed the remains of their beloved Master, the disciples of John "went and told Jesus." Matt. xiv. 12.

God's care for the welfare of his church is strikingly exemplified in the fact that at the time in which the last prophet of the former dispensation was doomed to perish, the Messiah, who was the head of the two dispensations, gave to the new description of teachers whom he now sent forth for the first time, the authority and powers of the teachers of the Jewish church. The last instructor of the people under the old dispensation was now permitted to suffer in order that undivided attention might be given to the long-expected king of the house of David.—*Townsend*. We ought not to close this subject without referring to the end of the persecutors of the Baptist. Seven or eight years after the death of John, Herodias incited her husband to go to Rome and endeavour to convert his tetrarchy into a kingdom. Through a letter of King Agrippa's, however, this project failed, and Herod, falling under the displeasure of the emperor Caius, was banished to Gaul, and ultimately, it is supposed, into Spain. Herodias was offered pardon, but chose to follow her husband into banishment. Salome was afterward married to her uncle Philip, tetrarch of Iturea, after whose death she became the wife of her cousin-german, Aristobulus, the son of Herod king of Chalechis, her mother's brother. By this husband she had several children, and here our information concerning her ceases.

30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

Verses 30, 31. *The apostles gathered themselves unto Jesus, &c.*] Having completed the mission on which they had been sent, (Matt. x. 5,) the apostles returned to Christ, probably then at Capernaum. *Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest, &c.*] By "desert place" a less populous part of the country is meant:—not, we think, a wilderness in our sense of the term. Luke (ix. 10) tells us that it "belonged to the city called Bethsaida; and was, therefore, most probably in its immediate neighbourhood. Some geographers have supposed that there were two Bethsaiidas—one in Galilee, under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, and another in Iturea, belonging to Herod Philip. We incline to the opinion that there was but one, the one in Iturea, which was situated on the north-eastern part of the Sea of Galilee. By referring to Matthew xiv. 13, it will appear that our Lord retired to this "desert place," on hearing of the murder of John; we may well suppose that one motive was a desire to improve the event by suitable meditation and reflection. Mark assigns an additional reason—the want of rest, for "they had not leisure so much as to eat."

Verse 33. *And many knew him*] Rather, *many knew*

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

JOHN vi. 3-15.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

It—that is, the place to which Jesus was going. Mac-knight supposes they had obtained this knowledge through the officiousness of the disciples. *And ran afoot*] That is, by land; Christ went by sea.—*Campbell. Thither out of all cities, &c.*] If our supposition be correct, that Bethsaida in Iturea is the place to which Jesus went, and that he sailed from Capernaum, the people must have crossed either the Jordan, or the Sea of Galilee. We presume that the original multitude was increased by accessions from the villages through which the people passed on their way to Bethsaida. It would seem that Jesus had been delayed in his voyage, as those on shore “outwent him.”

Verse 34. *Jesus was moved with compassion, &c.*] For explanation of these words see note on Matt. ix. 36, page 229. *He taught them many things*] Prompted so to do by his “compassion.” Luke states (ix. 11) that his teachings related to the “kingdom of God;” and that he healed them that had need of healing.

JOHN vi. 3-15.

Verse 3. *Jesus went up into a mountain*] Probably a mountain in the “desert place,” or open country, belonging to Bethsaida; whence he delivered his instructions to the people.

5 When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.)

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

Verse 5. *When Jesus saw, &c., he saith to Philip, Whence, &c.*] It is supposed by some commentators that Jesus addressed himself to Philip because he belonged to Bethsaida, (John i. 41;) Peter and Andrew were also natives of the same place. It would seem that this conversation took place after Jesus had concluded his discourse and healed the sick.

Verse 6. *This he did to prove him, &c.*] To try what idea he entertained of Christ's power.

Verses 7-9. *Philip answered, Two hundred pennyworth of bread, &c.*] It is evident from this answer that he had no expectation of the miracle which followed. The Roman denarius, rendered "penny," was a coin equivalent to about fifteen cents of our currency; the two hundred would therefore amount to thirty dollars. *Andrew saith unto Jesus*] Apparently in answer to the question which Christ had put to Philip. *There is a lad here with five barley loaves, &c.*] We are not satisfied whether this provision belonged to the disciples or not. John's account seems to favour the supposition that it did. The day being now "far spent," (Matthew says "it was evening,") the twelve disciples requested Jesus to send the multitude away, that they might go "into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. (Now there was much grass in the place.) So the men sat down in number about five thousand.

get victuals." Luke ix. 12. By the "evening" of Matthew, we are to understand a little after three o'clock in the afternoon, for the Jews had *two* evenings, the former of which began at that hour, and the latter at sunset. This illustrates the command to kill the passover "between the two evenings." Exod. xii. 6, margin. The season of the year, (a short time before the Passover, and consequently about the close of March or beginning of April,) would justify the remark of Luke, who says the day "began to wear away," or decline, for the sun would then set about six o'clock. In answer to the request of the disciples that he would send the multitude away, Jesus replied, as stated Matt. xiv. 16, *They need not depart, give ye them to eat.* Mark intimates the same fact. On this the disciples reply, (Mark vi. 37,) apparently with great astonishment, *Shall we go and buy, &c.* "There is reason to think that the sum named was a proverbial one, denoting any large amount."—*Bloomfield*. Hereupon Jesus inquired what amount of provision they had, and directed them to ascertain; which being done, they informed him five loaves and two fishes, (Mark vi. 38;) which he ordered to be brought to him. Matt. xiv. 18.

Verse 10. *Jesus said, Make the men sit down*] Luke adds, "by fifties in a company." This method was probably adopted to let the multitude know their own number. The word rendered "sit" rather implies that the people *reclined*, which was the customary posture

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples

in which they ate at that time. *About five thousand*] Matthew adds, (xiv. 21,) "besides women and children:" and if three thousand more be allowed for them unitedly, which Macknight thinks a moderate computation, then eight thousand persons were present at this time.

Verse 11. *Jesus took the loaves*] The other evangelists add, "and the two fishes." The word cakes or biscuits will convey to our readers a better idea of the size and shape of the Jewish bread than the term loaves. These cakes were made round, "and were nine or ten inches in diameter. The unleavened cakes were not thicker than a knife, but the leavened were as thick as a man's little finger. The bread was not cut with a knife, but broken."—*Ripley*. Hence the common Scripture phrase, "the breaking of bread." *When he had given thanks*] The expression of Matthew and Mark in reference to this act is, "he looked up to heaven, and blessed;" Luke says, "he blessed *them*," that is, the loaves, &c. Commentators are much divided in opinion as to the subject of the blessing—God or the food. May not both expositions be true? We believe Jesus blessed (or gave thanks to) God (which is implied in looking up to heaven) as the bestower of the food, and then commanded on the loaves and fishes that blessing by which they were to be multiplied in the distribution. Giving of thanks before eating is not only a pious and very becoming custom, but an ancient one. Mr. Benson supposes that 1 Sam. ix. 13 has reference to this ceremony. We know not what was the form of blessing used by the ancient Jews, but at the Saviour's time it was as follows: "'Blessed art thou, O Lord our

to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

God, the king of the world, who producest the bread of the earth! or, 'who hast produced the fruit of the vine,'" as the case might be. "Those present answer, 'Amen.' After meals the master of the house says, 'Let us bless him of whose benefits we have been partaking;' the rest answer, 'Blessed be he who has heaped his favours on us, and by his goodness has now fed us.'"—*Horne*. In thus taking the food and giving thanks Jesus acted as the head of the family usually did among the Jews; none of the members presuming to partake of the food, if he were present, until this had been done. *He distributed to the disciples, &c.*] "It is scarcely possible to imagine a more wonderful proof of the creative power of Christ than was displayed in this miracle. The provision was seen to multiply and grow, either in the hands of the apostles, as they were ministering it to the people, or in the hands of the people themselves. It was this immediate and actual proof of the presence of a Creator which compelled the exclamation of the multitude narrated in the fourteenth verse."—*Townsend*.

Verse 12. *When they were filled*] Having eaten of the loaves and fishes "as much as they would." *Gather up the fragments, &c.*] "Fragments" are broken pieces. But why gather them? Doubtless, 1st. That the nature and extent of the miracle might make the deeper impression on the minds of all present; and 2dly. To show that though Christ could provide any amount of food, he strictly forbade wastefulness. This teaches

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

us that though we ought not to be anxious about our subsistence, neither ought we to be regardless of our present comforts, or future necessities. Let "nothing be lost."

Verse 13. *Filled twelve baskets*] Holden thinks: "These were of wicker work, made of the cuttings of trees, [Bloomfield, flag-baskets,] and used by the Jews to carry provisions in when travelling, especially when among heathen." We know not the size of these baskets, but in all probability each one now contained as much or more provision than there was at the outset, although so great a multitude had eaten to fulness! This is one of the most convincing of our Lord's miracles, and is the *only* one narrated by *all* the evangelists.

Verse 14. *This is of a truth that prophet, &c.*] Meaning the Messiah. See Deut. xviii. 15.

Verse 15. *When Jesus perceived that they would make him king*] That is, that such was the present impulse of the people, arising from their admiration of his recent miracle. Matthew and Mark state that immediately after the miracle Jesus "constrained," or earnestly directed, which is all that the term means, "his disciples to take ship, and go to Bethsaida, while he sent the multitude away." It is suggested that Christ's rea-

LESSON XXII.

Christ walks on the sea of Galilee—He heals many people.—MATT. xiv. 24-36; MARK vi. 47-56; JOHN vi. 16-21.

MATTHEW xiv. 24-36.

BUT the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

son for this command was, that his disciples had some knowledge of the design of the people, and were more than willing it should be executed. When he had dismissed the people, *he departed into a mountain alone*] Matthew and Mark say, "to pray." We presume this to have been the same mountain on which he was sitting during the conversation with Philip. "And when evening was come he was there alone." Matt. xiv. 23. "Evening" *here* denotes the *second evening*, which began at sunset. The accounts of this miracle were published by St. Matthew and St. Mark while the greater portion of the persons who had been partakers of the miracle were living. No one contradicted, denied, or explained away, the account, which would have been done, if it had not been true.

NOTES ON MATT. xiv. 24-36.

Verse 24. *The ship was now in the midst of the sea*] This was some time after sunset of the day on which the five thousand men had been fed. The disciples alone were in the boat, Jesus having been left on the land. *Tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary*] Contrary to what? to the disciples' reaching the place to which they desired to go? Yes, for Mark says it was "contrary unto them." We think the expression imports also that the wind was "contrary," or *opposite to*, the course

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

of the current of the Jordan, which runs from north to south. We have before had occasion to remark, that when this current is opposed by contrary winds, which blow here with the force of a hurricane from the south-east, a boisterous sea is instantly raised, and we suppose that none but a wind opposed to the current would cause much ruffling of the water. Although the disciples were thus left to buffet with the waves, they were not unnoticed by the all-pervading eye of their Master, who saw them "toiling in rowing;" and it is certainly a pleasing reflection that "the Lord's eyes are over the righteous, and his ears open to their cry."

Verse 25. *And in the fourth watch of the night*] That is, between three o'clock in the morning and sunrise. The ancient Jews divided the night into three periods or watches; the first, which continued till midnight, was denominated the *commencing*, or *first watch*, (Lam. ii. 19;) the second was termed the *middle watch*, and continued from midnight till the crowing of the cock, (Judg. vii. 19;) the third, called the *morning watch*, extended from the second to the rising of the sun. These divisions and names appear to have owed their origin to the watches of the Levites in the tabernacle and temple.—*Jahn*. In the time of Christ, however, the Jews, in imitation of the Romans, divided the night into *four* watches; the first beginning at sunset, and closing at nine o'clock; the second from nine to twelve; the third from twelve to three, and the fourth from three to sunrise. The first of these was called the evening watch, the second the midnight watch, the third the cock crowing, and the fourth the morning

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit: and they cried out for fear.

watch. See Mark xiii. 35. It was, therefore, between three o'clock and sunrise that Jesus went to his disciples. The Saviour probably delayed joining the disciples to teach them faith and patience in trial, and that the extraordinary circumstances of his appearance might make a deeper impression on their minds. *Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea*] Saint Mark adds, "And would have passed by them." From John vi. 19 it appears that they had rowed "about twenty-five or thirty furlongs," or four miles. A Jewish furlong is given in Horne at a trifle more than one hundred and forty-five paces four feet English, and one thousand and fifty-six paces to the mile. Walking on the sea is enumerated by Job (ix. 8) among the evidences of divine power; and among the Egyptians the hieroglyphic for expressing an impossibility was a man's feet walking on the sea.—*Doddridge*.

Verse 26. *It is a spirit*] A phantasm or apparition; what we term a ghost: and surely their fear and conclusion were natural, for what but a disembodied spirit, no longer subject to the laws of matter, could be supposed able to walk on so yielding an element as water? We presume the darkness was too great to permit the disciples to distinguish more than the outline of the form, which would increase the illusion by imparting a sort of shadowiness to the figure. There could have been no delusion here, for they *all* saw him. Mark vi. 50. We have in this fact proof that, so far as these men were concerned, they were believers in a spiritual world: which, indeed, was the case with a majority of the Jews.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was

Verses 27, 28. *It is I, &c.*] The voice of Christ at once dispelled their fears. *Peter answered, If it be thou, bid me, &c.*] Peter seems to have been a rash, unthinking man; one whose fervour of disposition prompted him to engage heartily in whatsoever struck his fancy, without duly considering the case. We must not suppose, however, that there was any doubt in his mind as to this being really the Lord, for though the original is translated "*if it be,*" &c., it will also bear rendering *Since it is,* &c., which construction is indeed requisite to the understanding of the passage, for we cannot suppose that Peter would have made this offer if he had had any doubt. What Peter's motive for this request was is not stated; but we presume that, struck with admiration at this new evidence of Christ's power, he was impelled by the ardour of his feelings to boast of his confidence in him, and of the extent of his own obedience to him.

Verse 29. *And he said, Come*] It is probable that our Lord continued on the water for some time after he approached near enough to the vessel to converse. We may reasonably suppose that Jesus gave the desired permission in order to teach his self-confident disciple his own weakness. *And Peter walked on the water, &c.*] Enabled so to do by his faith in the power of Christ.

Verse 30. *But when he saw, &c.,* [or perceived,] *the*

afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand,

wind boisterous, he was afraid] We have no reason to suppose the wind to have been more boisterous at this moment than it was when Peter left the vessel; the change was in himself. His mind was then fully occupied with the conviction of Christ's omnipotence, so that there was not the slightest doubt that he was personally safe; *now*, however, he looks off from that omnipotence to the circumstances around, and in proportion as he notices these his faith weakens, and he becomes "afraid." We should learn from this to trust in the divine goodness and power, and not permit difficulties to turn aside our faith. *Beginning to sink, he cried, Lord, save me*] Doddridge supposes the word rendered to sink to be very expressive, intimating that he felt himself sinking with such a weight that he had no hope of recovering himself. Other critics, however, deny the word having any such force. It is thought by some that as Peter was a skilful swimmer, (John xxi. 7,) he had probably ventured on this attempt with some secret dependance on his art, which God, for wise reasons, suffered to fail him.

Verse 31. *Jesus caught him*] Diminishing at once the distance between them. *O thou of little faith*] Peter's danger arose not from any increased violence of the storm, but from the failure of his faith. This faith was "little," inasmuch as it was overcome so easily. *Wherefore didst thou doubt*] Peter did not "doubt" that this was indeed his Master, as is evident from his exclamation, "Lord, save me." But he *doubted* "in the sense of hesitating whether most to regard the violence

and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

of the waves or the power of Christ; like a man standing where two roads meet, undetermined which to enter, or like a balance vibrating with opposite impulses. He thus lost that full, simple view of the omnipotence of Christ, under the influence of which he had cast himself upon the water." If Peter's faith had not failed, he would doubtless have accomplished his purpose; and the act would have been recorded among the most illustrious examples of the power of that grace. Some may ask, Did Christ know that Peter's faith would fail? Doubtless he did, though this knowledge had no effect over Peter's mind; *he* was still free to continue to believe. Indeed, the perception of this failure was, probably, one reason why Jesus gave permission to Peter to make the attempt, because he saw that his faith was not of a right stamp—it partook too much of presumption. The difference between faith and presumption is, that faith is an implicit reliance and trust in God alone, presumption mixes with this a secret dependance on some other thing—perhaps, as Peter seems to have done, on *self*. Immediately after rescuing Peter, Jesus and he joined the disciples in the boat, and were received willingly.

Verse 32. *When they were come into the ship, the wind ceased*] Instantly; and from John vi. 21, it appears that "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went," one miracle following close after the other. Hereupon the disciples "were sore amazed in themselves, and wondered: for they considered not the mi-

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

racle of the loaves." Mark vi. 51, 52. Nonnus (a father of the Greek Church, who lived in the early part of the fifteenth century) has given a beautiful description of this miracle: he represents Christ as walking upon the water with unwetted feet; and when he came into the ship, it moved as by a divine impulse, like a winged thought of the mind, without wind, without oars, self-moving to the distant haven.—*Townsend.*

Verse 33. *Then they that were in the ship*] By this phrase some commentators suppose that the boat was not navigated by the apostles, but by a hired crew composed of Jews or heathen, or both. We confess we see no reason for the supposition, for as the twelve were mostly fishermen, they must have had sufficient knowledge of maritime affairs to govern a small boat: and the presence of others would break in on that privacy of communication which Jesus frequently sought for the purpose of instructing his disciples more particularly in the nature of his religion. *Came and worshipped him*] Paid him religious reverence. *Of a truth thou art the Son of God*] Some read this *a son of God*, or *son of a God*, because in the original the articles are not given, and assume that "the want of the articles implies a sense inferior to that which the same terms must bear when the articles are used with them. But this is wholly refuted by Matt. xxvii. 43, where the chief priests, mocking Christ upon the cross, say, 'If he be the King of Israel, let him come down, &c., for he said, *I am the Son of God.*' Here also the articles are wanting; but our Lord is taunted with having called himself *the* Son of God in the highest sense in which that term was

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased ;

36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment : and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

used."—*Watson*. Other cases can be adduced to the like effect. We suppose, therefore, that those who here came and worshipped Christ, must have designed this to be an unequivocal expression of their belief in his divinity.

The land to which they had come was that district of country on the western side of the sea of Galilee, and near its head, known as Gennesaret or Gennesareth. It is described by *Mr. Horne* as being nearly seven miles long, and three broad : very pleasant and fertile, and abounding in gardens. The important city of Capernaum was within its limits, for while *Matthew* and *Mark* speak of their arrival at Gennesareth, *John* says they reached Capernaum.

Verses 35, 36. *When the men of that place had knowledge of Jesus*] That he was among them. *They brought unto him all that were diseased*] It was in this neighbourhood that Jesus had performed some of his most astonishing miracles ; for instance, curing the paralytic, *Mark* ii. 3, &c. ; healing the diseased woman, and restoring life to *Jairus's* daughter, *Mark* v. 23, &c. *Besought him, &c.*] The virtue was not in the garment ; but the touching it was an act of faith, and it was rewarded. *Mr. Watson* suggests that the faith of the woman above referred to was the means of exciting the believing efforts of many others. Have we not in

LESSON XXIII.

Christ teaches in the synagogue of Capernaum.

JOHN vi. 22-vii. 1.

THE day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone;

23 (However there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

this an exhibition of Christ's motives in desiring that public confession on the part of the woman which he required?

NOTES ON JOHN vi. 22-vii. 1.

Verses 22-24. *The day following*] The day following that on which the five thousand men had been fed in the desert of Bethsaida. *When the people which stood on the other side, &c.*] From this it would seem that many of the people had remained all night in that neighbourhood, and had reassembled early in the morning. Some commentators suppose they had remained for the purpose of deliberating whether they should proclaim Jesus to be the Messiah. *Saw that there was none other boat there, &c.*] We presume the import of this passage to be,—The multitude having seen, the evening before, (that is, the evening of the day on which they had been miraculously fed,) that there was no boat in the place excepting that in which the disciples were about to depart, and that Jesus did not leave in company with them, felt assured that he would remain until morning, when they might see him. *However, there*

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say *came other boats, &c.*] After the disciples had left. *When the people saw*] In the morning. *That Jesus was not there, they also took shipping*] As many of them as could, in the vessels from Tiberias. *And came to Capernaum*] Supposing that as that was his usual dwelling-place, they should be more likely to find him there than elsewhere.

Verse 25. *When they found him on the other side*] That is, on the western side of the sea of Galilee. They found him in the synagogue of Capernaum. See verse 59. *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*] “Rabbi” signifies *master*. We know not that Jesus gave any direct reply to their question; but it seems that he at once adverted to their reasons for seeking him.

Verse 26. *Verily*] Truly, certainly *Ye seek me, because ye did eat of the loaves, &c.*] Selfish motives, and selfish motives *alone*, are attributed to them, and the judgment cannot be deemed uncharitable, since He “knew what was in man.” They doubtless ought to have sought him from higher considerations, and with more elevated desires—they ought to have been more impressed with the *miracle*, and thought less of the corporeal benefit derived from it. It may be feared that many at the present day act in conformity with the conduct here censured, in making a profession of religion, more from a sense of temporal advantage than with a proper desire to approve themselves unto God. We

unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for

would not be understood, however, as intimating that *temporal benefit* is to have *no weight* in influencing the choice—but only that present good should not be the ruling principle; on the contrary, we believe that every consideration which can be brought to bear on men's minds in inducing them to range themselves on the side of virtue and piety may properly be used.

Verse 27. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth*] By the “meat which perisheth” is meant that food which is needful to the support of the body; and which is termed “perishing,” because that and the body which it nourishes soon fail. Jesus seems to have had particular reference to their expectation of being again miraculously fed by him. To “labour” for this is to seek it earnestly—entirely. *But for that meat which endureth, &c.*] By the “meat which endureth” we understand the Saviour to mean that divine grace and knowledge which he imparts to the soul of the believer through faith. This is said to “endure to everlasting life” because it is by the grace thus communicated that a fitness for an existence of unending felicity is acquired. “He who labours not in the work of his salvation is never likely to enter into the kingdom of God. Though our labour cannot purchase it, in whole or in part, yet it is the way in which God chooses to give salvation; and he that will have heaven must *strive* for it.”—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

We are not to understand Christ as intimating that temporal things are to be uncared for; he who neglects to provide for his body is as surely in error as he is who cares not for his soul. Compare 1 Tim. v. 8, with

that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you : for him hath God the Father sealed.

2 Thess. iii. 10. *Him hath God the Father sealed*] Various illustrations are given of this passage. Dr. A. Clarke and Mr. Horne illustrate it by a reference to the Egyptian custom of affixing a seal to the horns of such beasts as were suitable to offer in sacrifice ; and express the opinion that as the Jews were prohibited offering to God any animal which had a defect, they probably also were in the habit of marking or sealing such as were, on examination, found to be without "spot or blemish." If we had any proof that the Hebrews adopted such a practice there would be strong reasons for supposing that our Lord had availed himself of it to declare his own sacrificial death. As, however, we have no such proof, we prefer understanding the passage, with Doddridge and some others, in the sense of *authorized*. The *seal* or *signature* of a person is received as evidence that he who bears that seal is invested by the person to whom it belongs with authority to act in his name : so Christ was empowered to bestow "the meat which endureth unto everlasting life;" that is, dropping the figure, was authorized to instruct the people in a purer morality than had yet prevailed, and finally, to atone for the sins of men by the sacrifice of himself as "a lamb without spot:" and the *evidence* that he was thus deputed was, 1st. The purity of his doctrines ; and 2dly. The miracles he wrought in attestation of his mission : these were his *credentials*. He therefore upbraids the Jews for failing to perceive his divine character ; when the seal he bore, the miracles he performed, so clearly and unequivocally declared him to be "the Son of God."

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign showest

“Ye seek me, *not because ye saw the miracles*, but because ye did eat and were filled.” To *seal* also means to *consecrate*, to *set apart*. Eph. iv. 30.

Verse 28. *What shall we do, &c.*] This seems to be in reply to Christ's exhortation to “labour not,” or, as the margin reads, “work not,” for the perishing meat. To “work the works of God” is, to do the things which are acceptable to him: they are called his works, because enjoined by him.

Verse 29. *This is the work of God*] THE WORK particularly pleasing to him and necessary to you. *That ye believe on him whom he hath sent*] Belief must, therefore, have been in their power, for God does not require what is impracticable; and by parity of reason, it is equally required of us, seeing we have as great, if not greater evidence, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. We should, therefore, at once confide in him, obey him, and number ourselves among his followers. “Take care,” says Bishop Mann, “to embrace the gospel covenant: this is the work that God requires of you.” See Matt. xvii. 5; 1 John iii. 23, 24. The following texts declare some of the more important doctrines respecting Christ and his works: John i. 1, compared with Heb. i. 1-3; John iii. 16, compared with Phil. ii. 5-8; Col. i. 16-23; Acts xiii. 30, 38; Heb. vii. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 1.

Verse 30. *They said, What sign showest thou*] “Sign” means miracle. Some commentators suppose

thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

that these objectors were *not* the people who had witnessed the miracle of the day previous, but the scribes and other influential persons of Capernaum, who were present in the synagogue when the people from Bethsaida entered, and who were the constant opponents of Christ. This supposition reconciles much that would otherwise appear contradictory. See verses 34, 41, 42. We do not blame the Jews for demanding "a sign" from those who set themselves up for teachers sent from God. Habituated as they had been to receive as truth only what should be attested and ratified by miracles, it was natural for them to ask for such proof: it was that kind of evidence to which their nation had been accustomed. But we do blame them, in the present instance, because that, when such signs had been given, (for Christ had wrought many miracles in Capernaum,) they did not believe.

Verse 31. *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, &c.*] The reference is to the forty years' sojourn of their ancestors in the desert between the Red sea and Canaan, on their coming out of Egypt, during almost the whole of which time they were miraculously fed by what is here termed "manna." The objectors here seem to institute a comparison between the recent miracle of Christ and that alleged to have been performed by Moses, for the purpose of depreciating the former. It is as though they had said, What is the miracle of yesterday, in comparison with that of Moses, in feeding our fathers forty years? It is evident that our translation

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

of Exod. xvi. 15 is faulty, as it assigns a mere question for the name of the article. Josephus says, "The Hebrews call the food manna; for the particule *man* in our language is the asking of a question, What is this?"—*Harris' Natural History*. It is called "bread from heaven," because it is represented as descending from the upper region of the atmosphere, which is frequently so denominated. By referring to Exodus xvi. 3, 4, it will be seen that this food was given in a time of real or dreaded scarcity; and it is described (verses 14 and 31) as being round and small, as hoar frost, and white, like coriander seed. It is not probable that it was a natural production, being unlike the gum now termed manna in many respects. Although, therefore, a small quantity of manna is now occasionally found in the desert of Sinai, as stated by Seetzen and Burckhardt, it cannot be regarded as the "manna" of the Israelites. The common manna is obtained by making an incision in the bark of the tree whence it exudes.

Verse 32. *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven*] Mr. Barnes says the word "that" should have been rendered THE, intimating that Moses did not give them the true bread from heaven. Mr. Wesley translates in the same manner. Our Lord seems to allow that the manna *was* given by Moses—that is, at Moses' request, though the Old Testament account does not say so. This is an interesting fact. *But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven*] Christ here manifestly asserts the superiority of the bread which he imparts over that given by Moses.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

Verse 33. *For the bread of God is he, &c.*] Rather, *is that* which cometh down, &c., as the original should be rendered, being a participle referring to *the bread*. The request in the next verse shows that he was not yet understood as speaking of a person, which he must have been if his expression had been as explicit as our version makes it.—*Campbell*. *And giveth life unto the world*] Spiritual life to them who were dead in trespasses and in sins. It will thus appear to be superior to natural food, which merely strengthens the body, whereas this *imparts* spiritual life.

Verse 35. *I am the bread of life*] Here the Saviour throws off the covering which had partly concealed his sentiments, and openly declares himself. He is "the bread of life," as having life in himself, and being the author of life unto others. *He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth, &c.*] "Coming" and "believing" here mean the same thing—the becoming true disciples of Christ. "Hunger" and "thirst" here express the feeling of *ungratified desire*—a *longing for blessings not possessed*. *Not* to hunger and *not* to thirst, then, in this place, import the gratification of spiritual desire—the possession of wished-for good.

Verse 36. *I said unto you, You have seen me, &c.*] This verse is rather obscured by its brevity. Its mean-

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

ing probably is, "I have already told you, and now tell you again, ye have seen me and my works, and known my doctrines, and yet ye believe not on me."—*Bloomfield*.

Verse 37. *All that the Father giveth me*] The connection between this verse and the preceding seems to be, "Yet, though ye believe not, I shall not labour in vain, there shall not be wanting those who will receive me;" for "all those persons whom the Father giveth me shall come to me." "It is inferred from this, and some similar passages in the gospels, that by a transaction between the Father and the Son a certain number of persons, called 'the elect,' were given to Christ, and in process of time 'drawn' to him by the Father; and that as none can be saved but those thus 'given' to him, and 'drawn' by the Father, the doctrine of 'distinguishing grace' is established; and the rest of mankind, not having been given by the Father to the Son, can have no saving participation in the benefits of a redemption which did not extend to them."—*Watson*. But it cannot be that this is the true construction of the text, although it may appear such at first sight; for, 1. What good purpose could it answer to upbraid the Jews for not believing on him, and then tell them that they *could* not believe, because they were not "given?" 2. The Saviour had already charged them with having the case in their own hands, and reproved them because they *would* not come unto him. John v. 40. It is also plain from verses 35, 40, and 47, that "coming" and "believing" mean the same thing; see also verses 64 and 65. *Shall come to me*] The word here rendered "shall"

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.

may with equal propriety be rendered *will*, and as this agrees better with the context we prefer to understand it in that manner. Though God wills all men to be saved, (1 Tim. ii. 4,) he does not *force* them; and those only will be saved who comply with the conditions of salvation. *Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out*] Then he will be received. Dr. A. Clarke says, "The words are exceedingly emphatical, *I will by no means thrust out of doors*; excellently rendered by Matthew of Erberg, 'I will not chase him out of the house.'" The figure represents a person in deep distress and poverty coming to cast himself on the bounty of one in more prosperous circumstances than himself. Although this act implies some confidence, yet it might not be sufficient to banish all fear that his petition would be rejected, and himself thrust out of doors; but our Lord assures those who come to him of a kind reception. What encouragement is here afforded to come to Christ! We ought to remark that the way to the Saviour is *by faith*.

Verse 38. *I came—not to do mine own will, &c.*] The will of God respecting Christ Jesus was, primarily, that he should die, that "he might do away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He came "down from heaven" for this purpose especially; all other things—such as his teachings, miracles, &c., were subservient to this. We are not to suppose, however, by the expression "not to do mine own will," that his will was contrary to that of "Him who sent him:" but merely that it was in submission to that of the Father. In John x. 30, who records a similar conversation, the unity of will and

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

counsel between the Son and the Father is unequivocally declared. The connection of this verse with the preceding is, *How should I repel any who rightly come unto me, since I came for the very purpose of saving them?"*

Verse 39. *This is the Father's will, that of all he hath given me I should lose nothing*] "'That I should, as far as depends on me, suffer no one to perish.' The verb is taken permissively."—*Bloomfield*. By his vicarious death, and resurrection from the dead, Christ has made atonement for sin, and purchased the influences of that Spirit "which quickeneth."

Verse 40. *This is the will, &c., that every one that seeth the Son, &c.*] "Seeth the Son" means *discerns him as the Son of God*, and the faith required is, to own him as the Messiah: this belief is opposed to the unbelief of those who "had seen him, and yet believed not." "The verse may, perhaps, be better rendered, 'This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life, and that I should raise him up at the last day.'—*Holsten*. The Scriptures inform us that *all the dead*, "small and great," shall be raised to an eternal life, of happiness or woe: many of the ancient Jews, however, are said to have believed that the wicked would have no resurrection; hence to speak of being raised up in the

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

last day was the same, to such persons, as to say that one was righteous, for such resurrection was deemed the peculiar privilege of the righteous.

Verses 41-43. *Murmured at him*] "Rather," says Holden, "at it," that is, at his declaration, *I am*, &c. We before stated the opinion of several commentators, that these objectors are not the persons who had been with Jesus on the other side. *Is not this Jesus*, &c.] It would appear from this passage that they had little or no knowledge of his miraculous conception; and also, that they still understood him to speak literally.

Verse 44. *No man can come to me except the Father draw him*] This seems to be assigned as a reason why the Jews should not "murmur" at Jesus' declaring himself to be the "bread from heaven," for, having failed to attend to the spiritual import of their own Scriptures, they could not understand his words. "The teachings of the Holy Spirit, and his influence upon the mind, are here called the drawing of the Father; and that *teaching* and *drawing* mean the same thing is evident since our Lord immediately adds, "It is written in the prophets, 'They shall be all taught of God.'" Experience and Scripture show that man "cannot" approach Christ and receive the remission of sin, unless moved thereto by

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

the Holy Spirit: for, being "of his own nature inclined to evil, he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing [or going before] us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."—*Methodist Discipline*. We believe that the Holy Spirit exerts sufficient influence on all men to lead them to Christ: but it cannot be truly said that men are really *drawn* to him, unless they yield to those influences. *They shall be all taught of God*] We have said that to be "taught" of God is the same as to be "drawn" of him, and this is also evident from what follows: "Every man therefore that hath *heard*, and hath *learned* of the Father, cometh unto me." We think it clear from this that the Spirit's influence is not confined to mere persuasion; but that where attention is paid to his suggestions, where he is "heard," he imparts ability to learn. The substance of the whole argument then is this, Whosoever *hears* the Father is *taught* of him; whosoever is *taught* of him is thus *drawn* by him; whosoever is *taught* and *drawn* by him *comes* to Christ, and is *given* to him; and whosoever, being thus given, perseveres in obedience and faith, shall be raised to a state of glorious exaltation at the last day.

Verse 46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father*] This is said, apparently, to guard the Jews against

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

forming any gross idea of the Deity, as though he were possessed of bodily shape. *Save he which is of God*] Evidently meaning himself. *He hath seen the Father*] “Kuinoel well expresses the sense thus, ‘What I have said of the teaching of the Father is not to be understood of complete and immediate instruction; *this* hath fallen to the lot of Him only who came down from heaven, and who hath obtained a full knowledge of God and of his will, as being most intimately united with the Father.’”

Verse 47. *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life*] Our Lord here reverts to the argument pursued from verse 31 to verse 35, at which point he had digressed to explain more fully what hindered the Jews from partaking of the bread of life. This everlasting life is the reward of the believer's faith, and is conferred in answer thereto, and not from the sovereign pleasure of God, irrespective of that faith.

Verses 49, 50. *Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead*] So that it neither kept their bodies from death, nor entitled them to life eternal. *This is the [true] bread from heaven*] Of which the manna was but a type. *That a man may eat thereof, &c.*] “Eat” seems to have the sense of *believe*. In verse 47 Jesus had said, “He that *believeth* on me hath everlasting life:” here that same life is promised to those who *eat*. Both terms convey the idea of that union and communion between Christ and the believer whereby spiritual

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

strength is received into the soul, as physical strength is imparted by food being received into the body.

Verse 51. *I am the living bread*] Macknight says, "There is a beautiful gradation observable in our Lord's discourse. The first time that he called himself the bread of life, (verse 35,) he assigned the reason somewhat obscurely; the second time, (verse 47,) he spake more plainly; the third time he added to the name the epithet of *living*." By "*living*" bread, we understand Jesus to declare himself to be the author and giver of that spiritual nourishment which will preserve the soul unto eternal life, as corporeal bread preserves temporal life. By the same kind of figure he elsewhere calls himself "*the resurrection and the life*," that is, the author of those blessings. *And the bread that I will give is my flesh, &c.*] That is, my body. "The Saviour thus endeavoured to draw the attention of his hearers to himself as *the source of spiritual blessings*, and not merely as a teacher. We know, by the events which have since occurred, that in these figurative expressions Jesus referred to his death on the cross. His immediate hearers, however, did not fully understand what he meant;" and probably he knew they would not; "but his object would be gained if he should arouse them to reflection, and lodge such thoughts in their minds as would prepare them, after he should have suffered, for a more full exhibition of his great doctrines."—*Ripley*.

Verse 52. *The Jews strove among themselves*] Lite-

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

rally, *they fought*; that is, disputed with great violence —*Benson*. They were, therefore, much divided in opinion, some being inclined to believe, others to reject this doctrine. *How can this man give us his flesh to eat*] It is plain that *these* objectors understood Christ in a literal sense: he corrects their error in verse 63, which see.

Verse 53. *Except ye eat, &c., and drink his blood, &c.*] We have before said that the word "eat" is used in this discourse in the sense of belief, that is, such faith in Christ as leads to a personal appropriation of the benefits of his death, and consequent communion with him. "As food in a rich man's store does not nourish the poor man who needs it unless it be given him, and he receive it into his stomach, so the whole fountain of mercy existing in the bosom of God, if uncommunicated, does not save a soul: he who is saved by it must be made a partaker of it." By the "blood" it is supposed that a violent death is more strongly set forth than by the expression, giving his flesh. "Eating" and "drinking" were proverbial expressions among the Jews for being made partakers of or sharers in a thing. So the happiness of heaven is expressed under the figure of a feast. Luke xiv. 15, 16, &c. We know not that there is here any reference to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but as this rite is the standing emblem of the body and blood of Christ, broken and spilled for us, we would urge a diligent attendance upon it, as the duty of all who would be made partakers of the benefit of Christ's death. *Ye have no life in you*] Our Lord

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

does not mean that they had not natural life, but that they had not that *spiritual life* of which he had been speaking.

Verses 55, 56. *My flesh is meat indeed, &c.*] The sacrifice of my body is really and truly made the means of conferring spiritual nourishment. *Dwelleth in me, and I in him*] Intimating the close and mysterious union which exists between Christ and the true believer.

Verse 57. *As I live by the Father, &c.*] Perhaps this is spoken of the human nature of Christ, which, no doubt, was equally dependant on the providence of God with other creatures; or it may denote that Christ derived his divine nature, by an eternal generation, from the Father, who is the fountain of life. "The full sense of the passage may be thus expressed, 'I have life in myself, and have power to give life, because the Father (who dwelleth in me, and I in him) hath life in himself, and hath power to give life.'"—*Burton*, as quoted by *Bloomfield*.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth

Verse 60. *Many of his disciples*] "Disciple" means *learner, follower*. It is plain from verse 67 that the twelve are not to be numbered among these murmurers. *This is a hard saying*] That is, it was an odious and offensive doctrine. *Who can hear it*] Who can hear it with patience.

Verses 61-64. *He said unto them*] It is supposed by some commentators, and we think not without reason, that the conversation narrated in this and the following verses did not take place in the synagogue, but that it was private. *Doth this offend you*] "Offend" means to *cause to stumble*; the disciples thought his language was *offensive* or *contrary* to reason, and therefore they took exception to it. From verses 62 and 63 it appears that they were offended at his declaring that he came down from heaven, (verse 38,) and that he was the bread of life, and should give his flesh for the life of the world. In removing the first of these objections Jesus employs a most energetic form of expression, "*What will you say, if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*" will you then deem my language incredible, and revert at once to my supposed earthly parentage? No! We have in this verse a plain and express declaration of Christ's pre-existence. *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*] Jesus here replies to their second objection, and tells them his words are not to be under-

nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

stood in the gross manner in which they interpreted them; but that his language had a spiritual meaning; and that it was *only* when so received that its force could be felt. Thus, though they and all mankind might become righteous, and have eternal life through "eating his flesh," yet it was to be done in a spiritual, not in a carnal or literal manner; for his words are spiritual and life-giving. *But there are some of you that believe not*] Alluding to Judas and such of the disciples as were "offended" at his sayings. Do these words imply that those of whom they were spoken had *never* believed Jesus to be the Messiah? We think not, for if they had never believed thus much, they would never have attached themselves to him. We presume the unbelief to be referable only to those subjects embraced in the present discourse at which the disciples had stumbled. *For Jesus knew from the beginning, &c.*] From the beginning of his ministry; who but God could have known this? From this and similar passages we infer that God foresees future contingencies:

"But his foreknowledge causes not the fault,

Which had no less proved certain, unforeknown."

Verses 66, 67. *Many of his disciples went back*] Forsook him, and returned to their former manner of

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Ch. vii. 1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

life. *Walked no more with him*] No longer professed themselves his disciples. *Will ye also go away*] Dr. A. Clarke says, "These words are very emphatical." Bloomfield remarks that this mode of address was not unfrequently resorted to by monarchs, generals, and philosophers when about to be abandoned by their adherents.

Verse 70. *One of you is a devil*] The original word imports an *enemy* or *adversary*: it also means, a *false accuser*. Our Lord's meaning evidently is, that one of them would prove an adversary to him, would desert and betray him. *He spake of Judas Iscariot*] That is, he *meant* him, though without naming him. We suppose that the apostles did not know at this time to whom he referred.

LESSON XXIV.

Christ converses with the scribes and Pharisees on the subject of Jewish traditions. MATT. xv. 1-20; MARK vii. 1-23.

MARK vii. 1-23.

THEN came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.
2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread

NOTES ON MARK vii. 1-23.

Verse 1. *Then came unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes*] The Pharisees were a religious sect of great influence among the Jews; the scribes were the accredited teachers or expounders and copyists of the law. *From Jerusalem*] Christ was at this time at Capernaum, distant from Jerusalem probably ninety miles. The scribes and Pharisees belonging to Jerusalem were accounted the most learned of their classes. It is probable that these men were deputed to watch the conduct of Jesus and his disciples in Galilee.

Verse 2. *When they saw his disciples eat bread with defiled hands*] The original literally signifies *common*, and is opposed to *holy*, that is, devoted to sacred uses. Josephus frequently uses the word "common" to denote what is ritually impure; as regarded the hands, therefore, it denoted that they were not washed ritually—that is, just before the meal. The washing of hands before taking food was an important matter with the Pharisees, as may be seen from the declaration of Rabbi Joses, one of their prominent teachers, that "he that partaketh of food with unwashen hands is worthy of death." The custom was not one of mere cleanliness, but partly of superstition, for whether the hands needed cleansing or not it was equally binding. This sort of washing is still

with defiled (that is to say, with unwashed) hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

practised in the East, for Mr. Roberts says, "No Hindoo of good caste will eat till he has washed his hands. Thus, however numerous a company may be, the guests never commence eating till they have performed that necessary ablution." The manner of the Easterns in taking food may have given rise to the custom, as they do not use knives or forks, but dip their fingers in one common dish.

Verse 3. *The Pharisees and all the Jews*] Dr. Campbell observes that this phrase ought to be rendered, the Pharisees "and all the Jews *who*" hold the tradition, &c., "otherwise we represent *all* the Jews as observing the traditions, though it is certain that the Sadducees did not." *Except they wash oft, eat not*] The word translated "oft" has greatly perplexed the learned, some rendering it "up to the elbows," others "to the wrists," others "with the fist," and others "oft." The allusion appears to be to some mode of washing among the Jews, which is now unknown. *Tradition of the elders*] "The *elders* do not appear to have been any body or council of men, but learned men who had become notable as expounders of laws or customs." These traditions were what the Jews termed the oral law, which they profess to have received from Moses, to whom it was communicated by Jehovah, at the time the ten commandments were given, of which it professes to be an explanation. These traditions were committed to writing about A. D. 180, by Rabbi Judah Haccodhesh, and called the mishna,

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be,

or second law. The Jerusalem and Babylonish gemaras are commentaries on the mishna, and when the one or the other of them accompanies it, the two form the Jerusalem or Babylonish talmud, according as the Jerusalem or Babylonish gemara is used. Of the impious authority given by the scribes and Pharisees to those traditions the following may serve as examples:—"The words of the scribes are lovely beyond the words of the law, for the words of the law are weighty and light, but the words of the scribes are *all* weighty." "My son, attend to the words of the scribes *more* than to the words of the law."

Verse 4. *From the market, &c.*] "Market" probably means any place of public resort. The supporters of the "traditions of the elders" were very scrupulous to wash hands on their return home from any public place, lest they should have received accidental pollution. This defilement they could not well avoid, as it was held that even mere contact with the clothes of "the people of the earth," as they called the *common people* of their own nation, caused defilement, and needed purification. It was supposed that without this washing, whatever was touched by them became polluted. *And many other things there be which they have received*] These "many other things" are things additional to the Levitical law. *The washing of cups and pots, &c.*] This is all to be understood of vessels of wood and metal, as those of earthenware, glass excepted, were to be broken if they became defiled. The original rendered "pots" denotes a wooden measure for liquors, holding a pint and a half. *And of tables*] By "tables"

which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why

here the *triclinia*, or raised sofas on which the Jews of our Saviour's time usually reclined at meals, seem to be meant: and it is suggested by the Pictorial Bible that the *covering*, not the couch itself, is intended. The marginal reading of our version is *beds*, instead of tables.

Verse 5. *Pharisees and scribes asked, Why walk not, &c.*] To "walk" in agreement with a law is *to obey it*; so to "walk not" is to *transgress*. From Matt. xv. 3, &c., it appears that Jesus answered their question by asking them, *Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God, &c.*] "What Maimonides says was probably applicable in our Lord's time, 'that the sanhedrim held that it had power to make void an affirmative command, and to transgress a negative one, in order to turn many to their religion.' " They therefore justified doing evil that good might come; which practice has been the source of great moral corruption. The answer of Christ is, in substance, If my disciples disregard the tradition of the elders, this is but a violation of a commandment of *men*, but ye transgress *EVEN the commandment of God*. Besides, insomuch as these traditions were often contrary to, as well as beyond the commandments of Deity, it was their duty to neglect them. Thus Christ strikes at the foundation of the whole system of tradition by disallowing that false authority which the Pharisees had assigned to it. The substitution of tradition in the place of inspired writings, and of ritual observances in the place of spiritual worship, is the error of the Romanists as it was of these Jews.

walk not thy disciples according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

For God commanded] The command to "honour our parents" is one of the ten delivered to Moses at Sinai, and was written "by the finger of God." Exod. xx. 12; Deut. ix. 10. Our Lord here specifies a case wherein the tradition of the elders had set aside the law of the Most High; and that, too, in the very strongest point of social obligation and natural duty. *Honour thy father and mother]* This command implies that the child shall reverence, respect, cheerfully obey, and, if necessary, *support* his parents: and that it was to the latter duty Jesus specially referred is clear from the context. See also parallel passage in Mark vii. 12. By the Jewish canons a son is bound "to afford his father meat, drink, and clothing; to lead him in and out; and to wash his feet:" that is, he is obliged to supply all his wants, liberally and with tender affection, so far as he is able. Yet, notwithstanding the obligation was thus recognised, it was made of none effect by the false glosses of their teachers. *He that curseth father or mother, &c.]* To "curse" a person means, with us, to *imprecate evil on him*; but the word here rendered "curse" means to *revile* or *speak lightly of*, to *slight*, to *neglect*, to *disregard*. As the Saviour is referring more particularly to that branch of "honouring" parents which consists in providing for them, we must understand by "curseth" the neglecting to provide such support. *Let him die the death]* The punishment among the Jews for neglect of filial duty and affection was death by stoning. Deut. x. 20, 21. We have no instance recorded of this law being carried into effect; but its promulgation is a strong proof of the abhorrence with which the Almighty regards

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines, the commandments of men.

8 For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups : and many other such like things ye do.

this unnatural crime, and must have had extensive influence on the minds of the people.

Verse 11. *It is Corban, &c.*] The word *corban* properly denotes any thing consecrated to the service of God ; but as the term was often employed in making a vow against the use of any article, it came, at length, to signify any thing *prohibited*, as well as any thing *consecrated*. When, therefore, any Jew wished to avoid the responsibility of providing for an indigent parent, he had but to say of such property as was needful for the purpose, " It is corban," or devoted, and he was freed from the performance of a duty which God himself had enjoined, and which he ought to have esteemed his greatest delight. Miserable casuistry ! But the iniquity of this conduct is not yet fully revealed, for in the estimation of many learned men, the *corban*, or prohibition, extended no farther than to exclude the person against whom it was uttered from all benefit from the thing prohibited, and the *undutiful, villanous* son might take that property which had been refused to the necessities of his suffering parent, and expend it on the gratification of any selfish passion ! So *Lightfoot, Bishop Jebb, &c.* This custom had its *rise*, doubtless, in a blind, mistaken zeal for the service of God ; and was probably encouraged by a corrupt priesthood, because it increased their

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseh father or mother, let him die the death :

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me ; *he shall be free*.

influence and weath. The Saviour does not condemn the practice of giving to religious or charitable purposes, for it is certainly our duty to devote *liberally* of our substance for the promotion of these objects. We ought not, however, to do this to the injury of those dependant on us ; and far less in order to get *rid* of caring for them. *He shall be free*] He shall not be liable to the penalties mentioned Matt. xv. 4. Thus they made "the word of God of none effect by their traditions."

Verses 6, 7. *You hypocrites, &c.*] "Hypocrite" comes from a word which signifies an *actor*, one who *wears a mask*, for the purpose of deceiving. So these Pharisees put on the appearance of great zeal for the honour of God and of his law, while in this instance they were dishonouring the one and subverting the other. The prophecy referred to is recorded Isaiah xxix. 13. Commentators are not agreed whether this passage is prophetic, in the proper sense of the term, or whether it is only so called because agreeing with the character of those to whom Christ applies it. *This people honour-eth me with their lips, &c.*] To honour God with the lips is to profess love, &c., to him ; and is the duty of all men ; the profession ought, however, to be accompanied with the affections, or it is of no real value. *In vain they do worship me*] The word rendered "worship" includes not only all acts of a directly devotional kind,

12 And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother ;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered : and many such like things do ye.

14 And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me, every one *of you*, and understand.

but every thing by which reverence and respect are shown to God. It comprehends, therefore, all the services of piety. *Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*] The word "doctrines," here, is not to be understood in the sense of *opinions* merely, but of injunctions, which, being "of men," or of merely human institution, are put in opposition to the commandments of God. "Bishop Jebb, in his version of Matt. xv. 5, 6, seems to have rendered the passage clearer and more elegantly :—

‘ But ye say :

Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, (Be that) a gift, by which thou mightest have been relieved from me, Must also not honour his father or his mother :

Thus have ye nullified the commandment of God by your traditions.’ ”

Verses 14–16. *When he had called the people, he said, &c.*] Our Lord delivered the instructions which follow, in the presence of the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem, who were malignantly observing him, and thus openly took the people out of the hands of these false teachers, and instilled into their minds truth as solid and important as the traditions of the elders were vain, and trifling in every thing but their corrupting effect. *Nothing from without a man can defile him*] To “de-

15 There is nothing from without a man, that, entering into him, can defile him : but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from

file" is to *stain*, to *pollute*, and is here spoken, we think, not of ceremonial, but of *moral* pollution—that is, of *sin*. But can "nothing from without, entering into a man, defile?" Would not the drinking of liquor to intoxication "defile" a man? We think not, in the sense here meant : for such crime would be traceable farther back, namely, to that evil desire which *induced* the guilty act, and which had its origin "within." *The things which come out of him are they that defile*] Those wrong words and actions which proceed from the heart are both the evidences of the defilement which already exists within, and deepen that moral uncleanness. It is evident from the context, as well as from Matt. xv. 11, that the remark of Jesus respecting what *defiles a man* is in answer to the question of the Pharisees contained in verse 2, "Why do thy disciples transgress by eating with unwashen hands?" It was a maxim with these quibblers that "whosoever eats bread with [ritually] unwashen hands is as if he had committed lewdness:" and they further held that "forbidden meats are unclean in *themselves*, and defile both body and *soul*." We understand Jesus to deny both these assumptions, and to assert that no kind of meats or drinks assigned by God for the use of man, taken temperately, renders him odious to him, as though he had committed sin.

Verse 17. *When he was entered into the house*] Probably Simon Peter's. From Matthew it appears that when he had entered the house the disciples in-

the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

formed Jesus that he had offended the Pharisees by his declaration concerning meats; probably, because he therein subverted the ground of their traditions, and even seemed to strike at the authority of the ceremonial law: whereon he remarked, *Every plant which my Father hath not planted, &c.*] A "plant" is a shrub, or young tree; and the figure of plants is frequently used in Scripture to represent the members of Christ's church on earth. In the present instance, however, the figure is used to denote the doctrines or traditions in question, by an allusion to the *mind as soil*, and *precepts as plants*. As these traditions were opposed to scriptural truth, they are said to be not of God's planting, and therefore, (whatever offence might be given to the scribes and Pharisees thereby,) were to be rooted up. *Let them alone*] "Our translation of these words," says Watson, "is too weak; for Christ exhorts his disciples, and all who might be present, not merely to avoid troubling themselves about them, as to whether they were offended or not, but enjoins an entire renunciation and disallowance of them as religious guides." *They be blind leaders*] "Blind" here means being destitute of *that* light they needed as teachers—ignorant of spiritual things. From this we learn that religious teachers who are themselves strangers to the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, are no more fit to teach the way to the kingdom of heaven, than blind men are to act as guides in a dangerous path. *If blind lead blind, both shall fall into the ditch*] Rather, into the *pit*, such as was dug for the reception of rain water.—*Bloomfield.*

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him :

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

The meaning is, the consequences of their erroneous teaching will be, the destruction of themselves and their hearers. Isaiah ix. 16. *Then Peter said, Declare to us this parable*] "Parable" here appears to mean what the Psalmist calls "a dark saying." Peter probably alludes to what Christ had said concerning defilement, verse 15. "Declare" has the sense of *explain*.

Verses 18, 19. *Are ye so without understanding also*] Christ's words convey a mild reproof to the disciples for not comprehending his meaning; and we can only account for what would otherwise seem dulness in them by supposing that their superstitious prejudices in respect to meats so preoccupied their hearts, that they could scarcely believe their ears, and that therefore Peter, in behalf of all, asks an explanation. Jesus then shows that meats cannot defile morally, because they do not enter into or make part of the soul.

Verses 21-23. *Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts*] The meaning is, that *evil principles*, being seated in the heart, and therefore governing the conversation and conduct, defile the man.

"Our outward act is prompted from within,

And from the sinner's [heart] proceeds the sin."

"Evil thoughts" are termed by Dr. A. Clarke *evil dia-*

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness :

logues; "for in all evil surmisings the heart holds a conversation, or dialogue, with itself." "Evil thoughts," says Mr. Watson, "appear to comprehend those wicked *imaginings* upon which corrupt minds love to dwell, those evil *desires* and *purposes*, and secret mental oppositions of *temper* to persons and to truth, which our Lord had already taught subjected men to condemnation as effectually as the overt acts to which they usually lead. *Adulteries* and *fornications* are violations of the seventh commandment, and are among the most debasing of crimes. *Murder* means unlawful killing, and is a violation of the sixth command; malice or hatred is frequently ranked with it, because it is the disposition from which murder oftentimes springs. 1 John iii. 15. *Thefts* or stealing is the taking and appropriating to our own benefit the goods of others without their consent, and usually proceeds from *covetousness*, which is a criminal desire for the *possession* of the property of others. By this means the tenth law is violated in indulging the desire, and the eighth in gratifying it. Matthew then records *false witness*, or lying, which is a violation of the ninth commandment, and concerning which it is said in the Scriptures, "The liar shall be turned into hell." *Wickedness* includes all malevolent affections, such as ill-nature, cruelty, &c. *Deceit* probably means fraud or unjust dealings; and is said to be an "abomination" to the Lord. O, beware of it! *Lasciviousness* may mean excessive desire, either for wealth, or the gratification of passion. An *evil eye* is supposed by some to denote an envious, grudging disposition; by others, a malignant, fault-finding frame of mind. *Blasphemy*

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

means calumny, or evil speaking, against either God or man, and is a violation of the third or ninth command, according as the crime is committed against God or man. *Pride* is an undue estimate of ourselves, and a proportionate undervaluing of others. It of course engenders an unwillingness to acknowledge error in ourselves, even when faulty, and is therefore frequently a serious difficulty in the way of the sinner's approach to God. It is on this account that pride is so frequently condemned in the Bible. *Foolishness* does not mean imbecility or mental weakness, but "levity of mind, or carelessness as to every thing serious, and is opposed to sobriety of thought."—*Holden*. All these evil passions "come from within," their seat being in the heart of every unrenewed man, to a greater or less extent; and so this saying of Christ is a most unequivocal declaration and proof of the fall of man from that original state of righteousness and true holiness in which he was created. By God's mercy, however, a fountain has been opened wherein every child of fallen Adam may wash and be purified from these enormities, and the way thereto is FAITH in the atonement of Christ. "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

LESSON XXV.

Christ heals the daughter of the Canaanitish, or Syro-Phœnician woman—He goes through Decapolis, healing and teaching—Four thousand miraculously fed.
—MATT. xv. 21-39; MARK vii. 24-viii. 10.

MATTHEW xv. 21-28.

THEN Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy

NOTES ON MATT. xv. 21-28.

Verse 21. *Jesus went thence*] From Capernaum. *Into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon*] These were two Phœnician cities, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, the former about one hundred and ten, and the latter one hundred and thirty miles north of Jerusalem. They were both included within the limits of the promised land, and assigned to the tribe of Asher, but were never conquered by the Israelites. For further notice of them see notes on Matt. xi. 21, pages 111-114. The neighbourhood of these cities was, in all likelihood, at this time inhabited chiefly by heathen. By "coasts" of Tyre, &c., most commentators understand the territory belonging to these cities, not the cities themselves. Having arrived at the place he wished to visit, Jesus, according to Mark vii. 24, "entered into a house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid."

Verse 22. *A woman of Canaan*] So called, probably, as being a descendant of the ancient Canaanites, who formerly peopled this whole coast. Mark calls her a "Greek" or Gentile, and a "Syro-Phœnician," because Phœnicia (as Canaan was termed by the Greeks) then made a part of Syria, and also to distinguish the people

on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

from the Phenicians of Africa, or Carthaginians, who were a colony from the original country. Although a Gentile, it does not, however, follow that she was an idolatress; for it is supposed that many Gentiles in those parts were believers in the one true God, and felt much respect for Judaism, though they did not profess it. She might easily, therefore, even though not a proselyte, have learned from the Jews, both the doctrine of a Messiah, and the appellation given him. *Have mercy on me; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil*] The mercy she asked for, then, was that the devil should be cast out, and her daughter healed. Mark says, "She besought Jesus that he would cast forth the devil," &c.

Verse 23. *He answered her not*] Appeared utterly to disregard her petition. *His disciples besought him, Send her away*] Grant her request, and send her away, for she is overwhelmed with distress, as is manifest by her *cries*. They did not, therefore, urge her cries as a reason why she should be sent away, but as a reason why her request should be granted. It is pleasing to notice this instance of the triumph of benevolent and charitable feeling toward a Gentile over the prejudices of the disciples; it is a proof that they had *begun*, at least, to imbibe the spirit of their Master.

Verse 24. *But he said, I am not sent, &c.*] A Jewish mode of saying his mission was primarily to them, as is plain from Mark vii. 27, "Let the children *first* be

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast *it* to the dogs.

filled." The Jews were denominated "lost sheep," because of their wanderings from God, and the faithlessness of their shepherds, or teachers. It will be remembered, however, that our Lord had already given instructions to, and performed miracles in behalf of some "who were not of the house" or family "of Israel." John iv. 13, &c.

Verses 25, 26. *Then came she and worshipped him, &c.*] Probably she was within hearing when Jesus made the above reply to his disciples. Yet, nothing daunted, and urged forward by the pressure of her case, and her mighty faith, she prostrated herself before him, and in one burst of deep feeling, exclaimed, *Lord, help me! He said, It is not meet to take the children's bread*] "Meet" means *right, proper*. The Jews gloried in the title of the "children of God," and were in the habit of applying it to themselves when contrasting their own nation with the heathen, whom, on account of their pollutions, they superciliously called "dogs." We do not suppose that Jesus meant to justify the use of this contemptuous epithet, or to intimate that he considered her as at all inferior to his own nation. Dr. Jortin remarks "he did it to *prove* her, not to insult her." "Bread" is probably figuratively used to express that salvation which should, in due season, be revealed to all men, but which, for wise reasons, was at present almost entirely confined to the Jews. "This was the first instance in which our Lord's aid had been invoked by a person neither by birth an Israelite, nor by profession a wor-

27 And she said, Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

shipper of the God of Israel. It was fit, therefore, that she should be put to some previous trial of her faith."—*Bishop Horsley.*

Verse 27. *She said, Truth, Lord ; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs, &c.]* This admirable woman concedes that it is not "meet to give the children's bread to dogs," admitting at once her inferiority to the favoured people, and then finds a reason for urging her request in the *very terms* of the refusal : "Still I beseech thee to help me, for even the *dogs* eat of the *crumbs!*" What an example of faith and humility !

Verse 28. *Great is thy faith]* Jesus knew the strength of her faith from the first, and the extent of the trial to which it might be safely put ; and he first seemed to neglect and then to deny her request, that her faith might, in the end, be more illustriously displayed.—*Watson.* *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt]* Mark's record is, "For this saying go thy way ; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." From this incident we may draw two important lessons : 1st. That God is no respecter of persons, but always accepts sincere faith and fervent prayer, proceeding from an humble, penitent heart ; 2d. That it is our duty to continue in prayer with earnestness, although the answer thereto should be long delayed.—*Benson.*

MARK vii. 31-37.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue:

MARK vii. 31-37.

Verse 31. *Departing from the coasts of Tyre, through Decapolis*] Decapolis was a district made up of ten cities, some of which were widely separated from the others. It is thought that nine of them were on the east of the Jordan, and one (Scythopolis) on the west thereof. Jahn *supposes* the names of the nine to have been, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Dion, Canath, Gerasa, Raphana, and Damascus.

Verse 32. *They*] The people. *Bring one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech*] Deafness is inability to hear; the "impediment" spoken of is thought by some to have been a stammering in his speech; hence after his cure it is said, verse 35, *he spake plain*; others think him to have been dumb. We prefer to consider him a stammerer. It is probable that both the deafness and stammering were the effect of disease, and not natural to him.

Verse 33. *Put his fingers into his ears, &c.*] "Since these actions could contribute nothing to the cure, it has been asked *why* our Lord used them. Such inquiries are often rash, and we are not bound in all cases to give a reason; (since our Saviour's *adoption* of an action shows its *fitness*;) yet here we can be at no loss. Christ

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man : but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it ;

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well ; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

was pleased, in condescension to human weakness, to use external actions significant, in this instance, of the cure to be performed, and to show that the power he was about to exert resided *in himself*."—*Bloomfield*. See farther on Mark viii. 22–24, page 325.

Verse 34. *He sighed*] In compassion with human suffering. *And saith unto him, Be opened*] In Hebrew phraseology, *to open any one's eyes or ears* denotes imparting to him the faculty of sight or hearing. "The power," says Mr. Watson, "was not in the actions employed, but in the mighty word *ephphatha*, for then *straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain*. Dr. Clarke refers the act of putting the fingers in the ears, of spitting, of touching the tongue, &c., to the man himself, and supposes him to do these things to explain to the Saviour the effect of the disorders under which he was labouring, and to excite his compassion. Ephphatha, he says, is a Syriac word. Mark is the only evangelist who names this miracle ; another proof that his gospel is not an abridgment of Matthew's.

MATTHEW xv. 29-39.

29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

31 Inasmuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

MATTHEW xv. 29-39.

Verses 29, 30. *Jesus came nigh unto the sea of Galilee, &c.*] We presume Jesus to have been still on the eastern side of that sea. *Great multitudes came, &c.*] We suppose the "maimed" to have differed from the "lame" in having lost some of their limbs, (Matt. xviii. 8,) whereas the "lame" were probably made so by accident or disease, or natural malformation. The original, rendered "dumb," means "deaf and dumb."—*Bloomfield*.

Verse 31. *The multitude wondered when they saw the dumb speak, &c.*] "Saw" has here the sense of *perceived*. *Maimed, to be whole*] If "maimed" means wanting a limb, as we have supposed above, then the Saviour must have created others! "What an astonishing manifestation of *omnific* and *creative* energy must the reproduction of a hand, foot, &c., be at the word or touch of Jesus."—*Clarke*.

We think that the following miracle was not wrought on the very *day* in which these works were performed; but are of opinion that it followed very soon after, was

32 Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now, three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

in the same neighbourhood, and in the presence of the same people.

Verse 32. *I have compassion on the multitude*] Which, Mark says, (viii. 13,) was "very great," and many "of them came from far." *Because they continue with me three days*] During the whole of which time we must presume them to have remained exposed to the weather. If, however, this was soon after the Passover, as many commentators think, there would be no danger in so doing, as at that season the sky is serene and the atmosphere warm. *And have nothing to eat*] We are not to suppose that they fasted three days, but that now, on the third day, their provisions failed.

Verses 33-36. For information on various points in these verses, see notes on John vi. 8-12, pp. 266-269.

Verses 37-39. *Seven baskets full*] The word here rendered "baskets" is different in the original from that so translated in the account of feeding the five thousand. This is said to denote a smaller basket, carried by hand,

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

LESSON XXVI.

The Pharisees require other signs—Christ exhorts his disciples to beware of the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees—Heals a blind man at Bethsaida—Peter confesses Christ to be the Messiah.—MATT xvi. 1-20; MARK viii. 11-30; LUKE ix. 18-21.

MATT. xvi. 1-12.

THE Pharisees also and the Sadducees came, and, tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

and therefore called a hand-basket; it is supposed that the other basket was usually carried on the shoulder. Having thus supplied their necessities Christ *sent away the multitude and came into the coasts of Magdala*] Mark says, *to Dalmanutha*. Authorities differ as to the location of these places; but the majority of commentators place them on the western side of the sea of Galilee, between Tiberias and Capernaum. Magdala and Dalmanutha are supposed to have been neighbouring towns, and the district in which they were situated to have been called indifferently by either name. It is suggested that Mary Magdalene was a native of Magdala, and received her surname from that circumstance.

NOTES ON MATT. xvi. 1-12.

Verse 1. *The Pharisees with the Sadducees came*] To Jesus, who is supposed to have been still at Magdala, on the western coast of the sea of Galilee. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the two most powerful

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.*

sects of the Jews; and, although inveterate haters and opponents of each other, on account of the difference of their religious creeds, were united in their opposition to Jesus Christ. The sect of the Pharisees was by far the more numerous body of the two, and possessed more influence over the common people than the rival party; but the Sadducees are said to have numbered in their ranks more persons of wealth and political consideration than did the Pharisees. The Sadducees did not receive the traditions of the elders, to which we have seen the Pharisees were strongly attached; they are supposed by some to have rejected all the books of the Old Testament Scriptures excepting the five given by Moses, while it is universally allowed that the Pharisees received the whole; neither did they credit the doctrine of a future state of existence, which their opponents held. *And tempting, desired that he would show them a sign from heaven*] To "tempt" means in this sense to *try*, to *prove*; they probably professed a desire to put his claims to the Messiahship to a fair test. But they wished different evidence from what they had ordinarily witnessed, and therefore asked that the "sign," or *miracle*, might be "from heaven." Mr. Watson suggests that they might have made this request from the prevalence among them of certain traditions, that the advent of the Messiah would be marked by various portentous omens in the air. The appearance of an extraordinary rainbow, for instance, is mentioned as one of these indications. See note on Matt. xii. 38, page 142.

Verses 2, 3. *He answered, When it is evening, ye say it will be fair weather, &c.*] Observations of this
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3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day : for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky ; but can ye not discern the signs of the times ?*

kind are very common among ourselves, and, as to the evening aspect of the western horizon, are probably as common as they could have been in Palestine. These prognostics cannot be of universal application, as they necessarily vary in different climates. The ancients in general were attentive observers of all indications of weather, and Lightfoot says, the Jews prided themselves on their skill in these matters. "Rains in those regions are cold, and are announced by previous whirlwinds. The north and west winds in particular indicate rain. If the evening be red, the morrow is expected to be serene ; if the morning be red, rain is expected."—*Jahn*. "Lowering" means *gloomy, troubled* ; and in this case portends elemental strife. *O ye hypocrites*] So called, we presume, because, though they professed themselves desirous of ascertaining whether he were the Messiah, they rejected the strongly-marked evidence he had given them of that fact, and demanded other proof, which (as the event showed) they would also have cast aside. *Signs of the times*] These were, 1st. The departure of the sceptre from Judah, according to the prediction of Jacob, for Judea was now a Roman province ; 2d. The appearance of Christ's forerunner, in the person of John the Baptist ; and, 3d. The character and miracles of our Lord, which so exactly answered to prophetic description. The evidences of Christ's pretensions to be the Saviour of the world, have come to us with even stronger proofs than the Jews were furnished with in attestation of his being *their* Messiah ; for we have not

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed.

5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

only *all* that they had, but the overwhelming testimony furnished by his death and resurrection in addition. The infidelity of the present day is therefore more to be reprehended than that of the Jews.

Verse 4. For exposition of this verse see note on Matt. xii. 39, 40, pages 142, 143.

Verses 5, 6. *When they were come to the other side*] The eastern side of the sea. *They had forgotten to take bread*] They then recollected their omission. From Mark viii. 14 it appears they were not entirely without, as they had "one loaf," or cake. *Jesus said, Beware of the leaven, &c.*] We have often admired the ready and forcible manner in which the Saviour improved the incidents occurring around him to the spiritual edification of his hearers. So in the present instance. The "leaven of the Pharisees," &c., means their doctrines, as is clear from verse 12, which are so called because of their insinuating and corrupting nature. Leaven is sour or fermented dough. Mark, in his account of this conversation, states that Jesus cautioned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and of *Herod*; but there is no real discrepancy, since Herod and the Herodians (that is, his adherents and courtiers) were no doubt Sadducees.

Verse 7. *They reasoned among themselves, &c.*]

8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

“Lightfoot illustrates this passage by reference to a practice of the Jewish doctors, who frequently forbade their disciples to buy the bread of heathens and Samaritans, which would be a partaking of their leaven. This view explains the perplexity of the disciples, who could not take their Master’s words literally, for they were not likely to buy bread of the opulent Pharisees and Sadducees, nor were they in a place where they could buy bread at all, being in a desert; and they did not as yet lay hold of the spiritual meaning of his words. They therefore “reasoned among themselves,” both as to the supply of their necessities, and what might be the meaning of their Lord’s words. This clearly appears, because Christ’s reproof, contained in the following verses, relates both to their want of faith as to supplies, and their lack of a prompt spiritual discernment.

Verses 8–11. *Why reason ye, &c.*] “The meaning is not, Why do ye reason because ye have brought no bread? but, Why do ye assign *that* as the reason of my admonition? “Doctrine” means *instruction given—the things taught*, and is compared to leaven because, as that

MARK viii. 22-26.

22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

diffuses itself throughout the mass of meal in which it is hidden, so do these teachings, fully received, gradually assimilate the man to themselves, for "as a man thinketh, so is he." We ought, therefore, to take heed how we hear

Mark viii. 22-26.

Verses 22-24. *He cometh to Bethsaida*] On the northeastern part of the Galilean Sea. *They bring a blind man to him, &c.*] It is probable that this man was not born blind, but had lost the power of sight from some cause. *He led him out of the town*] "Thus showing the inhabitants," says Dr. Clarke, "that he considered them unworthy of having another miracle wrought among them." We think a better reason, probably, is assigned at the close of this section, which see. *I see men as trees walking*] He saw dark shadows in motion before him, which on that account he took to be men; but otherwise he could not distinguish them from trees. Objections having sometimes been raised to the means the Saviour saw fit to use in restoring sight to this man, we believe we shall render an essential service to many by laying before them the excellent remarks of Dr. Graves on this subject, as quoted by Mr. Horne:—There are three instances recorded in which Jesus Christ used *deliberate external application* in the cure of afflicted persons, viz., the cases of the man born blind, (John ix. 1-7,) of the blind man of the present lesson, and of the deaf man near the sea of Galilee: (Mark vii. 32-37:) and in all these cases the reason for using such external application "seems to have been one and the

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes,

same, namely, to convey to the individuals on whom the miracles were performed, a clear assurance that Jesus was the person at whose command and by whose agency the cure was wrought, and to enable them to state to others the ground of this assurance fully and circumstantially. For this purpose our Saviour used such a mode of application as was best calculated to make an impression on those senses which these men possessed unimpaired, antecedent to the miracle, and such as led them to observe he was about to interpose in order to perfect those organs which were defective. A little attention will show that every circumstance in the different modes of application had this tendency.

“A blind man can know another [person] only by the voice or the touch. The blind man near Bethsaida our Lord led out of the town, remote from the crowd, that he might be sure of the person who spoke to or touched him; he then spat on his eyes, and laid his hands on him and restored sight to him, though imperfectly; after that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and he saw clearly. What possible mode could give him a more full assurance that the cure was wrought by the interposition of an external agent, and that Jesus was that agent? The deaf man could judge of the intentions of another only by *seeing* what he did; him, therefore, our Lord took aside from the multitude, that he might fix and confine his attention to himself, and then he put his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue, thus signifying to him that he intended to produce some change in these organs; he then looked up to heaven, at the same time speaking, [for though the man could not

and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.

hear, he could *see Christ's lips move*,] to signify that the change would proceed from a divine power, exercised at his interposition." [The case of the man born blind is somewhat analogous to that of the subject of our lesson, and substantiated by the same train of argument; we therefore omit it.]

"We may be confirmed in believing this to have been the design of these external applications, by observing that they were used in no instance except those of blindness and deafness, when the defect of the senses rendered them necessary to convey such assurance of Jesus having been the author of the miracle. And still more by observing that it does not appear that any of these three men had any previous knowledge of our Saviour's power and character. The man born blind he healed without any solicitation. The blind man at Bethsaida, and the deaf man, do not appear to have come of themselves, they were brought by their friends. * * * When the two blind men at Capernaum, and two others near Jericho, applied to the Saviour to be healed, it was with a declared previous conviction of his divine power that they followed him, crying, *Son of David, have mercy on us!* Here, therefore, a less remarkable external application was sufficient; as they professed their belief, Jesus only required that this profession should be sincere: *Believe ye, said he, that I have power to do this? and they said, Yea, Lord: then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you; and their eyes were opened.*

25 After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up : and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

"If these remarks are just, they exhibit one of those numberless cases where incidents apparently minute and objectionable display, when well considered, the miraculous nature of the facts, and the admirable propriety of our Lord's conduct in every circumstance ; and every such instance confirms strongly the conclusion that our Lord's miracles were not delusive visions, or the extravagances of a wild and senseless fanatic, but plain proofs of a divine power, exhibited with the sobriety and dignity becoming his divine character."

Verse 25. *After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and he was restored*] "Though our Lord did not, probably, by this intend to teach any lesson in regard to the way in which the mind of a sinner is enlightened, yet it affords a striking illustration of it."—*Barnes*. Sinners are by nature spiritually blind ; the effect of the Holy Spirit's influence is, 1st., to convince them of this truth ; 2d., to open their eyes, to show them their condition and danger ; and, 3d., to lead them to look to Jesus for help, to aid them in coming to him. Oftentimes, this process goes on gradually, though surely ; yet the more earnestly the inquirer seeks after salvation, the sooner, generally speaking, is that salvation obtained.

Verse 26. *Jesus sent him away to his house, &c.*] "So it appears that this person did not belong to Bethsaida."—*Clarke*. This miracle, though so fraught with interest, is not named by any other evangelist ; another proof that Mark is not an abridger of Matthew. Having

MATTHEW xvi. 13-20.

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

wrought this good work, Jesus departed from Bethsaida, and went into the towns of Cesarea Philippi.

MATTHEW xvi. 13-20.

Verse 13. *When Jesus came into—Cesarea Philippi*] This city is situated at the northern extremity of Palestine, and near the sources of the Jordan. Its original name was Laish; but when it was taken by the Danites they called it, after the name of their father, Dan. Judges xviii. 29. This name it retained until the time of Philip the tetrarch, who, having enlarged and beautified it, named it Cesarea, in honour of Tiberias, the Roman emperor, the name Philippi being added to distinguish it from the Cesarea on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. The place is now called Banias, and, according to Burekhardt, is a small town containing about one hundred and fifty houses; the inhabitants are principally Mohammedans. *Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am*] “The title, Son of man,” says Bloomfield, “occurs sixty-one times in the gospels, and is always used by Christ himself, never by any other person.” It was the prophetic designation of the Messiah; and was doubtless used by Daniel (vii. 13) to predict his incarnation: the title does not, however, necessarily imply humiliation, inasmuch as Christ is now, though glorified, as truly the Son of man—that is, a proper human being—as he was when he sojourned upon earth. Acts vii. 56. It appears, from Mark viii. 27, that this question was put to the disciples while they were on their journey from Bethsaida to “the towns of Cesarea

14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Philippi;" and Luke (ix. 18) gives the more particular information that it was while Jesus and his disciples were engaged in religious exercises, and, probably, after he had been praying. There is, therefore, nothing contradictory in these statements. Dr. A. Clarke suggests that our Lord put this question to the apostles, not because he wished to know the minds of the people concerning himself, (for of this he could not be ignorant,) but because he wished to instruct *them* in the nature of his character and mission. Some commentators think that the passage should read, "Who do men say that I am? The Son of man?" But, as Mr. Watson remarks, "It is clear from the answer that our Lord did not inquire whether the people said that he was the Son of man, (to which the reply of the disciples is as indirect an answer as can be conceived,) but indefinitely, what were the reports concerning him."

Verse 14. *Some say, John the Baptist, &c.*] Many commentators think it evident from this passage that the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, was pretty generally received among the Jewish people; and that we are to understand that they believed the *soul* of John the Baptist, or of Elias, &c., to have taken possession of the body of Jesus. But we think the text does not support such a view, and that the parallel passage in Luke (ix. 19) makes directly against it. The Jews interpreted Mal. iv. 5 in a *literal* sense: hence, when they speak here of Elias or Elijah, they mean the *very* Elijah who formerly performed such wonders in their nation; and when Luke speaks of one of the old

15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am ?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

prophets, he says expressly—*risen from the dead* : both of which facts prevent, we think, any reference to me-tempsychosis being understood.

Verse 16. *Thou art the Christ*] “Christ” comes from the Greek *Christos*, answering to the Hebrew word *Meshiach*, or *Messiah*, and means “anointed.” What first gave rise to the term was the ceremony of anointing, by which the kings and high priests of God’s people, and sometimes the prophets, were consecrated and admitted to the exercise of their functions. As this consecration was considered as adding a sacredness to their persons, it served as a guard against violence. Its efficacy in this way was remarkably exemplified by David, when he had it in his power to avenge himself of Saul ; “The Lord forbid,” said he, “that I should do this thing, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.” The word in this passage translated “anointed” is the same as that elsewhere rendered *Messiah* or *Christ*. The term was also employed to denote those specially favoured of God, as were the patriarchs, concerning whom he is represented as having said, “Touch not mine *anointed*.” *Psa. cv. 15*. But the most eminent use of the word is its application to our blessed Saviour. The prophets who most especially speak of him by this title are David, Isaiah, and Daniel ; the first of whom represents him as anointed king of God’s heritage, (*Psa. ii. 2* ;) the second as consecrated to be the messenger of good tidings to the inhabitants of the earth, (*Isa. lxi. 1, &c.* ;) and the third, as appointed to make expiation for the sins of the people. *Dan. ix. 25, 26*.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath

The term Christ is, properly, a title of office, not a proper name: and ought always to have the definite article prefixed, *Jesus the Christ*: yet, though originally an appellative, the word came at length, from the frequency of its application to one person only, to supply the place of a proper name. Grotius remarks that in process of time the name Jesus was very much dropped, and that of Christ (which had never been used before as the proper name of any person, and was therefore a better distinction) substituted for it. This use seems to have begun soon after our Lord's ascension: in his lifetime it does not appear that the word was ever used in this manner. In John xvii. 3, he is represented as calling himself Jesus Christ; but this is so singular that I cannot help suspecting an accidental omission of the article.—*Campbell. The Son of the living God*] This title is a designation of nature, not of office. "Thou art the Christ," says Mr. Watson, "is a noble part of the confession, for it includes all those high offices to which he was *anointed* by the Holy Ghost, and which are so largely dwelt upon in the prophetic Scriptures; but the title 'Son of God' is added, and stands in manifest opposition to the phrase 'Son of man,' in the question of our Lord, which is founded altogether on the real humanity of the Messiah. 'Living God' is the high and distinguishing appellation of Jehovah, in opposition to dead idols. That the title, *Son of God*, was given by the disciples with reference to their faith in our Lord's divine nature is rendered certain by the sense put on that very phrase by the Jews themselves. For instance, when Jesus Christ, amid an indiscriminate company of hearers,

not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

claimed God as his proper father, (John x. 29-31,) the Jews were about to stone him for blasphemy. So, also, when tried by the Jewish sanhedrim, he was condemned as guilty of blasphemy, and therefore worthy of death, for claiming to be *the Son of God.*" These citations are sufficient to show that the phrase was understood by the Jews at large as implying his PROPER DIVINITY, and the apostles must have regarded it in the same light:—the confession is, therefore, an unequivocal declaration of their belief in him as "very God." We understand Peter as speaking in the name of all the apostles, and consequently declaring their sentiments as well as his own.

Verse 17. *Jesus answered, Blessed art thou, &c.]* The word rendered "blessed" means *happy*: and Peter is said to be happy, because he had a true knowledge of Jesus Christ, "whom to know aright is life eternal." Nor is this declaration to be understood as applying exclusively to Peter; for as he answered in the name of the rest, so he receives the blessing as representing them all. "Bar-Jona" means *son of Jona*—"bar" being the Syriac word for *son*.—*Barnes. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it, &c.]* That is, *man*, as composed of flesh and blood. To "reveal" is to make known something that before was unknown or secret. The meaning of our Lord is that Peter had not derived this knowledge of Christ from his own sagacity or from the instructions of man, but from the teaching of the Father, whereby he had obtained a right understanding of those great truths which Christ had taught, and a disposition to credit the evidences of their divine origin by which they were accompanied. We do not, however, understand

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

by this "revelation" any other communication than that gracious help which the Father imparts by his Holy Spirit to every candid, sincere, believing inquirer.

Verse 18. *Thou art Peter*] On this verse the church of Rome mainly rests its doctrine of the supremacy of the pope. "Peter" was not the original name of this disciple, but a surname given to him by Christ when he became his disciple, (as was customary with the Jewish rabbis at the baptism of proselytes.) See John i. 42, where the Syriac name "Cephas," importing the same as the Greek word *Petros*, English "Peter," is prophetically assigned him. Its signification we presume to be indifferently *stone* or *rock*; and from this import of his name our Lord declares he should be a foundation stone upon which he would build his church. In common parlance a "rock" is the emblem of *firmness*, *fixedness of purpose*, &c.; and we presume it to have been these foreseen ultimate qualities in Peter's character that induced Jesus to bestow this honourable appellation on him. *And on this rock will I build my church*] The visible church of Christ is "a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance."—*Methodist Discipline*. Every society of true Christians is a church, for such particular societies are so termed in the New Testament; but the body of the faithful throughout the world constitutes *the church of Christ*,—and it is in this general sense that the term is here used.—*Watson*.

Many commentators, ancient and modern, contend

that the foundation on which the church was to be built was either Christ, who is supposed to have pointed to himself when he said, "on this rock will I build," or the profession of faith which Peter had just made : but, we think, the more natural interpretation of the words is that which refers them to Peter. "His name signifies a *rock* and our Lord, taking the term figuratively, in his usual manner, says, 'Upon this rock will I build my church,' meaning, unquestionably, not upon Peter's *person*, but upon his *office and ministry*."—*Watson*. "The sense is, 'Thou art, by *name*, *rock* ; (that is, thy name means *rock* ;) and upon *thee* (that is, upon thy preaching, as upon a rock) shall the foundation of the church be laid.'"—*Bloomfield*. "Here again it is to be observed, that although Peter is addressed, it is still as the representative of all the apostles : and thus this passage is in entire harmony with that of Saint Paul : 'And are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone : ' (Eph. ii. 20 :) where we see no distinction made among the apostles, but all are represented as constituting the foundation of a building, the chief corner stone of which is Christ."

The gates of hell] The word rendered "hell" generally means the *world of the dead*, the *unseen world* : figuratively, this region of the dead is said to have *gates*. As the silent ravages of death, however, ill accord with the imagery of the text, which implies a more violent and active kind of opposition, we think another interpretation ought to be sought. Mr. Watson says, "The idea suggested by the church being built on massive foundation stones intimates its power to resist assaults of war, like the strong fortresses of antiquity, built upon

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth,

the strongest sites. In the epistle to the Hebrews, (ii. 14,) the devil is represented as a sovereign who has the power of death; by *hades*, (or hell,) we may therefore understand not only the receptacle of the wicked dead, but the abode of the devil and his angels, who are represented as having dominion there, and who issue from this abyss to carry on their ravages among men, and to disturb and destroy the church, which is the shelter of souls from their malice and wiles. Now as the strongly fortified gates of cities were anciently the places where the sovereign and his chief men sat, to hold their councils, and arrange their plans of peace or war, our Lord, by a metaphor easily understood, promises that all the counsels of Satan against the church, and the wars he may wage by his agents to overthrow it, shall never so *prevail* against it as to vanquish and subdue it. Such has thus far been the glorious fact; the church still lives and flourishes, despite of persecutions and corruptions." These prophetic words also secure the continuance of the church, (not, indeed, of any particular denomination, but of the church universal,) so long as time shall endure.

Verse 19. *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*] By "kingdom of heaven" we here understand the *gospel dispensation*, the keys of which are said to be given to Peter, because he was the apostle who first opened or proclaimed the gospel in its fulness, to both Jews and Gentiles: namely, to the Jews on the day of pentecost; and to the Gentiles, when he visited the centurion Cornelius at Cesarea. Acts ii. 14-36; x. 34-44; xv. 7. From an examination of Acts xv. 7, 13,

shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

19; Gal. ii. 11; and 2 Cor. xii. 11, it will appear that this was the only superiority given to Peter over the other apostles. The emblem of the keys was doubtless a very familiar one to the apostles, as part of the ceremony of constituting a Jewish rabbi, or doctor of the law, consisted in presenting the candidate with a key, as a sign both of his ability and duty to open the meaning of the law, which key he afterward wore as a badge of his office. In Isa. xxii. 22 there is reference made to the giving of a key as investing with power and authority. *Whatsoever shall be bound—loosed—on earth*] These expressions are manifestly Jewish, and therefore may be satisfactorily explained by reference to their mode of speaking. To “bind” and “loose,” with them, were usual terms for declaring what was lawful or unlawful; therefore, to “bind” was to declare a thing obligatory: to “loose” was to *free* from its obligation—to *annul* it. Take an instance from the rabbinical writings: “The school of Schammai *binds* it; the school of Hillel *looseth* it.” By the declaration, that such things as were “bound on earth” should be “bound in heaven,” &c., is meant, that whatsoever *opinions* or *acts* should be declared by the apostles to be obligatory, or binding on men,—that is, necessary to men’s salvation,—such declarations should be ratified in heaven: which fact manifestly supposes them to be acting in these matters under the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God, and is a sufficient proof that beyond them this [distinguishing] power could not extend: therefore, that no

LESSON XXVII.

Christ predicts his death and resurrection—The transfiguration of Christ.—MATT. xvi. 21–xvii. 13; MARK viii. 31–ix. 13; LUKE ix. 22–36.

MATT. xvi. 21–xvii. 13.

FROM that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and

man or set of men has any right to pretend to it at this day. In proof of the correctness of this view, we would remark that we have no instance of the apostles' forgiving or retaining the sins of any individual by virtue of the power deposited with them; much less, of their pretending to transmit this power to their successors: all they did was simply to state and enforce the *terms* on which such forgiveness or condemnation depended. That Peter was not more honoured in *this* respect than the other apostles, is, we think, evident from Matthew xviii. 18, where our Lord addresses them collectively, and says, "Whatsoever *ye* shall bind," &c. "It is this authoritative declaration of the terms of man's forgiveness, and how he is to walk so as to secure the approbation of God," says Mr. Watson, "which distinguishes those writings from all others. They not only contain a revelation from God, but they have an authority as LAW, derived from this—that God acts upon them."

NOTES ON MATT. xvi. 21–xvii. 13.

Verse 21. *From that time forth, &c.*] "Forth" here means *forward*; from the time that Peter confessed Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of God," he, Jesus, declared to *the apostles*, more explicitly than he had before done, the nature, necessity, and manner of his death.

By some, Jesus may be charged with having used deception in not sooner explaining the true nature of his kingdom. But we reply, that he never said or did any thing to countenance the national prejudice that he, as the Messiah, would establish a universal monarchy of a *temporal* character. Indeed, in the very first declarations of the establishment of his kingdom, both by John the Baptist and the great Teacher himself, it was *intimated* that a spiritual kingdom was intended; hence they both sought to produce a reformation in religion and morals, and never courted popular favour, which they would have done, had they aimed at establishing an earthly dominion. It is true that both the forerunner and Christ himself availed themselves of the popular expectation that God was about to visit his people, and set up among them a kingdom which should have no end; and, in accordance with such expectation, their declaration, in the beginning, was, that the *kingdom of God was at hand*; but because they made use of this attractive form of expression, it by no means follows that, with it, they combined such views and expectations as their countrymen had done. Of the offering his life in sacrifice, which is directly opposed to the idea that Jesus intended to assume the place of an earthly ruler, he henceforth spoke on every suitable occasion; and whenever he saw his disciples elated with joyful expectations respecting the approach of an earthly kingdom, he, in order to suppress such thoughts, informed them that his end was near. More he could not have done to prove that he neither shared in the prevailing expectations of his countrymen, nor ever intended to satisfy them. "*Must go*," "*must suffer*," and such like phrases, merely signify that it was *proper*, in order to

suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

the right accomplishment of his mission, for Jesus to do and suffer the things spoken of. *Elders, chief priests, and scribes*] These three orders composed the sanhedrim, or great council of the Jewish nation. The "elders" are supposed to have been selected from among the princes of the tribes, or heads of family associations; and are not to be confounded with the elders or magistrates of the towns or cities. The "chief priests" were those who had filled the office of high priest, and the heads of the twenty-four courses or classes into which the priesthood was divided; they were probably members of the sanhedrim by virtue of their office as priests, and the acting high priest was president of the court. Such "scribes" as were members of the sanhedrim were chosen to that honour, and probably possessed great influence, being the most learned part of the assembly. They were not a *sect*, as the Pharisees and Sadducees were, but an *order* of men: and, as their name imports, now were, or had heretofore been, much engaged in writing; they are supposed to have been the principal copyists and expounders of the Scriptures. It is asserted by many, and, we think, not without reason, that they were chiefly, if not entirely, Levites; and this opinion is strengthened by the fact that we nowhere read in the New Testament, as we do in the Old, of "priests and Levites," but always of "priests and scribes:" besides, we learn from various passages in the Old Testament Scriptures that the Levites had been the accredited religious teachers of the people; so we know the "scribes" of the present time to have been similarly engaged.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou

Verse 22. *Then Peter took him*] Commentators do not agree as to the nature of this action, some supposing that Peter took Jesus aside, and others that he laid hold of his hand or arm, as people frequently do when remonstrating with any one. *And began to rebuke him*] To "rebuke" means, with us, to *reprove*, to *censure*, and is too strong a term for this place, since all that is intended is an affectionate remonstrance. *Be it far from thee, Lord, &c.*] Literally, *Be merciful to thyself*; well expressed in the margin, *Pity thyself*,—which is, says Mr. Wesley, "the advice of the world, the flesh, and the devil to every one of our Lord's followers." The phrase is equivalent to our "God forbid," and is an earnest dissuasive, as though the thought of such suffering were not to be endured.

Verse 23. *But he turned, &c.*] Mark says, "When he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter," &c.; so that we presume Jesus turned from Peter, designing, by this act, to express more strongly his disapprobation. *Get thee behind me, Satan*] Bloomfield says, that the word "Satan" means an *evil counsellor* as well as an *adversary*. May we not, then, reasonably suppose that our Lord meant nothing more than that Peter's suggestion was an evil one, inasmuch as its tendency was, to prevent the redemption of mankind from the power of the devil? We think this a more natural construction of the passage than that which makes Peter the unwitting agent of diabolic influence; and the reason assigned for the "rebuke" agrees as

savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

well with this view as it does with the other. *Thou art an offence unto me*] "Offence" means here, as in most other passages in the gospels, *a stumbling block*, or *hinderance*. This Peter was, by endeavouring to dissuade Christ from suffering; so adding to that natural horror which the Saviour at times entertained of his painful and ignominious death. *Thou savourest not the things of God, &c.*] The word translated "savourest" is, in Rom. viii. 5, rendered "to mind," and has here the same meaning. The minds of men are often swayed by their affections. Having thus rebuked Peter, Jesus (according to Mark viii. 34) called unto him "the people and his disciples," and instructed them, also, in the nature of his kingdom.

Verse 24. *If any man will come after me*] That is, desires to become my disciple; for the original expresses a strong inclination or wish to do so.—*Holden. Let him deny himself*] To deny one's self is to *disown* or *disregard* former evil dispositions and habits, so as to effectually strive against and overcome them. *Take up his cross*] Patiently and willingly submit to every kind of suffering, even to an ignominious and cruel death, if called thereto, as Christ did. See note on Matt. x. 38, page 253 The greater part of the shame attendant on death by crucifixion consisted in the criminal's being obliged to bear a part of the cross on which he was to suffer. It is said to have been a custom of the Jewish doctors to lay before their proselytes what inconveniences would attend upon their precepts; and, in con-

25 For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

formity to this usage, our Saviour acquaints those about him with two things that might be a means of deterring them from embracing his religion; namely, the difficulty of the duties that would be required of them, and the greatness of the sufferings to which they would be exposed.—*Stackhouse*. To such, however, as were willing to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the trials of discipleship, he says, *Follow me*. This we are to do, by confessing ourselves his followers, carefully obeying his commands, and imitating, as far as in us lies, his excellences. And it should be borne in mind, that although the religion of Christ subjects those who embrace it to many trials, arising chiefly out of the constant warfare it wages against all unrighteousness, it still affords much present happiness to its possessor, and conducts to certain and unending felicity.

Verse 25. *Whosoever will save his life, &c.*] Man is composed of two natures, matter and spirit, or body and soul. His existence in the present state is termed natural life; his existence in a future state is termed eternal life. The Scriptures inform us that the character of man's future existence, so far as its happiness or misery is concerned, is dependant on the opinions he embraces, and the actions he performs, during natural life: if, therefore, in order to secure the continuance of natural life, he violate his duty to God, he loses eternal life; but if, through love to God and his cause, he persevere in the path of duty, he will secure to himself everlasting felicity. A reason is here assigned why men ought to "deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Jesus:"—namely, that, by refusing to do this, in

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

order to secure present life and its comforts, they forfeit eternal life, and all the consolations of the grace of God.

Verse 26. *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*] To “profit” by a thing, is to *gain* by it. Gaining the “whole world” denotes the possession of *honours, riches, and pleasures* of the world, or so much of them as any one can possibly enjoy. To “lose the soul” means, to have that soul excluded from the bliss of heaven, and doomed to endure the agonies of hell. Campbell says, the word rendered “lose” had better have been translated *forfeit*. The argument is this: If an earthly and temporary life be deemed of so much importance as to be regarded as cheaply bought at almost any sacrifice, much more ought ye to esteem a *heavenly and eternal* one. Inasmuch as the original word rendered “soul” is the same as that translated “life” in the preceding verse, some contend that the word *life* should have been used here instead of soul. But, as Mr. Watson forcibly remarks, while “it is very true that a man would be nothing profited were he to gain the world and lose his life, [for the plain reason that he could not then enjoy it,] yet, had this been our Lord’s proposition, it would have been an argument to enforce upon the disciples an extreme carefulness about the preservation of their lives, rather than a noble readiness to lay them down for the sake of the truth, which it was the intention of Christ to inculcate.” *What shall a man give in exchange, &c.*] “Exchange” here has the sense of *ransom*. It has ever been a common thing for persons to ransom their *life* from violent

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

death by the payment of immense sums of money; but when "the Son of man shall come in his glory, to reward every man according to his works," and the soul of the wretched man who, from the fear or the love of the world, has renounced Christ, has been doomed to positive punishment, what shall *he* offer as a ransom? There will be no ransom then; the only ransom, the sacrifice of Christ, having been neglected or cast away in that period of probation during which alone it could have been secured.—*Watson*.

The Scriptures furnish us with some intimations of the final condition of a man who may be said to have "gained the whole world:" that is, so much of it as he could possibly enjoy. "He was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." Yet what did all his wealth do for him? Alas! "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." O, be warned by his example, and seek the "kingdom of heaven;" for if you neglect so to do, your soul—your precious, immortal soul—will be lost, lost, lost! Reader, may God have mercy on thee and me!

Verse 27. *The Son of man shall come, &c.*] Namely, at the end of the world. *In the glory of his Father*] With the majesty becoming and belonging to God:—strange contrast to his then humble condition! Townsend says, "By the term glory in this passage the Jews understood the bright flame and cloud, the glory of the shechinah, in which the Angel Jehovah was accustomed to appear to the ancient fathers. There is a beautiful passage in Habakkuk, in which the prophet

describes the appearance of the *schechinah* which led the Israelites out of Egypt into the wilderness of Paran :

‘God came from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran.
His glory covered the heavens,
His brightness was as the light.’ ”

Then he shall reward every man according to his works] Fearful day ! “Reward” here means *recompense* ; then will Christ award to each person the approval or condemnation his course has merited. That the decisions of that day will not, however, be exclusively, or indeed *chiefly* on works, is plain from those express passages of Scripture which represent eternal life as the fruit of Christ’s atonement, and the gift of God through him : for if it were otherwise, then the reward would be of debt, not of grace : and if of debt, then in our own right, which is contrary to the Scriptural statement.

If, then, it be asked, “in what sense good works are any ground at all of the final sentence of eternal life, we answer, they are so secondarily and subordinately,
1. As evidences of that faith and that justified state from which alone truly good works can spring. 2. As qualifying us for heaven ; they and the principles from which they spring constituting our holiness, our ‘meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.’ 3. As rewardable ; but still of grace, not of debt, of promise, not of our own right, since after all we have done, though we had lived and suffered as the apostles to whom the words were first addressed, we are commanded to confess ourselves ‘unprofitable servants.’ In this sense good works, though they have no part in the office of justifying the ungodly, that is, in obtaining forgiveness of sin, are necessary to salvation, though they are not the ground

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

of it. As they are pleasing to God, so are they approved and rewarded by God."—*Watson's Institutes*.

Verse 28. *Shall not taste of death*] That is, *shall not die*. Till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom] Luke says, "Till they see the kingdom of God," and Mark, "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." The "kingdom" referred to is the mediatorial reign of Christ, which was fully established on his ascension into heaven, "to appear in the presence of God for us." "It is called a kingdom," says Mr. Watson, "because all men are placed under the power of Christ as Mediator, to redeem, govern, and save; and under his power as Lord, to correct, and, if impenitent, to condemn." To give efficiency to the means used to bring men into a state of willing, gracious subjection to Christ, he poured out the Holy Spirit on the disciples on the day of pentecost; thus, according to his own prediction, enduing them "with power from on high;" which language sufficiently determines the import of Mark's "kingdom of God coming with power."

There are three "comings of the Son of man" spoken of in Scripture; viz., 1st. To establish his mediatorial kingdom; 2d. To destroy the Jewish nation; 3d. His final advent, when he shall come to "judge the world." Some commentators refer the "coming" here spoken of to the destruction of the Jewish nation, (sometimes called Christ's second advent,) which took place about forty-three years after this time; but we think such an interpretation is forbidden by the texts cited from Mark and Luke. Besides, the infliction of punishment on the

MATT. xvii. 1-13.

1 And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

Jewish nation is spoken of as a "coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," the imagery being taken from the circumstances of the general judgment, whereas, the coming of Christ *in his kingdom*,—that is, to establish his kingdom,—we believe always refers to his spiritual kingdom, and not to his judgments. The expression, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man," &c., need not be understood as referring to any distant period; for there was at least one among them, Judas, who lived not to see the day of pentecost.

MATT. xvii. 1-13.

Verse 1. *After six days*] Luke (ix. 28) says, "about an eight days after," including the day on which the transactions last noticed, and that in which the events now about to be considered, took place. Matthew and Mark only include the intermediate days: therefore, there is no contradiction. *Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John*] This James was the one afterward beheaded by Herod, (Acts xii. 1, 2,) *not* the author of the epistle. These three disciples Jesus seems to have honoured with a peculiar intimacy: they only were chosen to be with him at the resurrection of Jairus's daughter, in this transfiguration, and during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Mark v. 37; Matt. xxvi. 36, 37. *And bringeth them into a high mountain apart*] Most modern commentators suppose this to be Tabor, a mountain of Galilee, which rises from the northeastern side of

2 And was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

the plain of Esdraelon ; but we think the inferential evidence of the text is in favour of some mountain near Cesarea Philippi. Our reasons for entertaining this opinion are : 1st. That we have no mention of our Lord's having left that neighbourhood ; 2d. That *after* the transfiguration Mark says, Jesus "departed thence, passed through Galilee, and came to Capernaum ;" (Mark ix. 30, 33 ;) and therefore it is highly improbable that so long a journey as that from Cesarea Philippi to Capernaum should have been taken just before it, and so much of it repeated directly after ; 3d. "That the definite article in the original of Luke limits the sense to *some* mountain which might be called *the* mountain in respect to Cesarea ; most probably, that part of the ridge of Hermon which runs out into the plain of the Jordan, within six miles of Cesarea Philippi, which is called Mount Panias."—*Bloomfield*. "Apart" means *aside* from all other persons ; not, as some suppose, that the mountain stood "apart" or detached from any other. Luke says, that Jesus went to this mountain *to pray* ; and from other passages in the gospels it appears that he often chose such places for his devotions.

Verse 2. *Was transfigured before them*] The word "transfigured" signifies a *change of form or appearance*. What this change was we are expressly told : 1st. *His face shone as the sun* ; that is, with a peculiar lustre. Luke says, "the fashion [or appearance] of his countenance was altered." A similar appearance, though probably not equal in degree, is ascribed to Moses when he came down from the mount. Exodus xxiv. 29, 30. So also, in Hebrews i. 3, Christ is called, "the brightness

3 And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

of the Father's glory;" that is, the *splendour* or *shining out*, like brightness emanating from the sun. And in the description given of the glorified body of the Redeemer, as he appeared to John in Patmos, it is said, "his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." The second change was that of his garments, which became *white as the light*, and Mark declares that they "became shining, exceeding white, so as no fuller can white them." The word "fuller" commonly means one who dresses cloth, or *fulls* it, so as to make it more thick and strong: here it means one who *bleaches* or *scours* cloth, so as to whiten it.

In speaking of the transfiguration, Mr. Wesley says, "The indwelling Deity darted out its rays through the veil of the flesh: and that with such transcendent splendour, that he no longer bore the form of a servant. His face shone with divine majesty, like the sun in its strength; and all his body was so irradiated by it, that his clothes could not conceal its glory." Luke says this change came over Christ while he prayed. John refers to this transfiguration in chap. i. 14 of his gospel, and Peter, in his second epistle, i. 16, 17.

Verse 3. *There appeared unto them Moses and Elias*] We presume that the apostles knew who these celestial visitants were, either from some remarks made during the conversation, or by direct revelation from heaven. Moses was the distinguished leader and lawgiver of the Jewish nation, and author of the first five books of the Old Testament; Elias, or Elijah, was the most zealous and bold of the ancient prophets, and had been translated, or taken bodily to heaven. 2 Kings ii. 11. We

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here

presume, therefore, that Elijah appeared in his transformed or glorified body, but think that as Moses was a disembodied spirit, he probably assumed the *appearance* of human form, not the *reality*; although it is not impossible that his body was raised from the rest of the grave for this manifestation. *Talking with him*] From Luke ix. 31 it appears that Moses and Elijah also “appeared in glory,” by which expression we understand the glory which the redeemed in heaven shall possess; and that the subject of their conversation with Jesus was, “the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” It may be worthy of remark, that the word rendered “decease” (*exodus*) is not that by which death is usually expressed, but is one signifying *deliverance*, *departure*, and expresses very happily the change which then takes place, death being *not* the termination of existence, but a *departure* into another state of being. (The same term is used in 2 Peter i. 15.) To glorified spirits, Christ’s death was an object of intense interest. By faith in that foreseen death they had been saved; and now that it was really near, the Redeemer of mankind being about to lay down his life, it is no wonder that this was the burden of his and their thoughts.

It appears from Luke ix. 32, that at some time while on the mountain, Peter and his fellow-apostles were “heavy with sleep,”—in other words, were *sound asleep*. This, probably, was while Jesus was engaged in his devotions, before the transfiguration; and the sudden splendour,—the bright shining by which the change was accompanied,—and the sound of voices, awoke them. From this fact, as well as from Luke ix. 37, we conclude

three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud,

the transaction to have taken place during the night. That the apostles awoke before the glorious scene closed is expressly declared; for "when they were awake they saw Christ's glory, and the two men that stood with him."

Verse 4. *Lord, it is good for us to be here*] This exclamation was uttered by Peter as Moses and Elijah departed. Luke ix. 33. *Let us make here three tabernacles, &c.*] That is, *booths* composed of branches of trees, such as were hastily raised for temporary purposes by travellers, and were also reared at the feast of tabernacles.—*Campbell*. Some commentators suppose that Peter imagined his Master was now about to establish that kingdom of earthly grandeur which the Jews had so long and fondly looked for: but we think they assign to him ideas more definite than he was, at the time, capable of forming; for Mark and Luke intimate that he was in a bewildered state of mind—unconscious, apparently, of every thing but a pleasurable emotion, which induced him to express a desire for the continuance of the awfully glorious and absorbing spectacle.

Verse 5. *A bright cloud overshadowed them*] The "cloud" was the *schechinah*, or visible symbol of the divine presence, called by Peter (second epistle, i. 17) "the excellent glory," which presence had been frequently manifested among the Jews under the similitude of a cloud. Exod. xvi. 10; Num. xi. 25; 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. To "overshadow" is to *envelope in shade*; but as this cloud is said to have been a "bright" cloud,

which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

and could not, therefore, cast a shade, Clarke, Bloomfield, and some others take the import of the original to be simply, that the cloud *surrounded*, or *spread itself about* the company then present. Mr. Watson, however, thinks the shechinah was at once dark and bright ; a dark cloud which sent forth rays of light ; and that in the present instance there was a cloud, a brightness issuing from it, and that by the dark part of the cloud the whole company was overshadowed, which filled them with awe ; for Luke says, “they feared as they entered into the cloud.” *And behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, &c.*] This was the voice of God, interposing and bearing testimony, the second time, in favour of his Son. The first instance was at his baptism, Matt. iii. 17. *Hear ye him*] That is, him *alone*, he being thus declared supreme lawgiver of the church. There seems to be reference here to the prophecy of Moses, recorded in Deut. xviii. 15. “To hear” imports *obedience* as well as *attention*. We do not suppose that Christ now *first received* supreme authority, for he had several times claimed that—for instance, in his sermon on the mount.

Verses 6–8. *They fell on their face—sore afraid*] Impressed, doubtless, with emotions of the deepest awe at the presence and voice of Almighty God : the posture is expressive both of fear and reverence. In this condition they continued till Jesus came and dispelled their fears, when, *lifting up their eyes*, (Mark says, “when

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

they had looked round about,") *they saw no man, save Jesus only*, their heavenly visitants having vanished, in all probability, during their temporary prostration. Luke says, "When the voice was passed, Jesus was found alone."

The design of this symbolical representation seems to have been: 1st. To prepare the minds of the apostles for the abolition of the Mosaic ritual, and the acknowledgment of Christ as the supreme lawgiver of the church. 2d. To strengthen their faith under the great trial which awaited them in the betrayal, condemnation, and death of their beloved Master, as well as to reconcile them to that event. 3d. To comfort them under the tribulations they might be called to pass through, by a prospect of the glory which awaited them in the kingdom of God. The presence of Moses and Elijah was, also, a positive proof of the immortality of the soul; and, in the case of Moses, that the interval between death and the resurrection is passed by the disembodied spirit in a state of consciousness.

Verse 9. *As they came down from the mountain*] On the day following that on which they had ascended. Luke ix. 37. *Jesus charged them, Tell the vision to no man, until, &c.*] A "vision" is a supernatural representation of any thing to the sight of men when awake; and so stands opposed to a dream, which represents things to the imagination during sleep. But why were the apostles commanded to preserve strict silence on this subject until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Pro-

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come?

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things:

bably because he knew that their testimony would be, by some, deemed incredible, and create stronger opposition to his doctrines than had yet been exhibited, and might be a means of inciting others to acts of insubordination and violence, under the belief that the "kingdom of heaven," or earthly reign of the Messiah, was come. The disciples were obedient to this charge; for Luke (ix. 36) says, they "kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen:" but from the statement of Mark it seems "they [afterward] questioned one with another what the rising of the dead should mean," not being able to comprehend it. In order to account for their apparent dulness in this respect, it should be remembered that the Jews entertained the belief that the Messiah should live for ever; (Luke i. 33, John xii. 34;) and they could not reconcile what their Master said concerning his death and resurrection with this doctrine.

Verse 10. *Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?*] The disciples seem to have been surprised at the charge of secrecy, for it was an opinion commonly received by their nation, that Elijah would appear before the advent of the Messiah; and they may have thought that his appearance during the transfiguration was, in part at least, the appearing which was expected. Hence they asked, *Why then say the scribes, &c.?* Are they right or wrong in their opinion? and if right, why should we not publish it?

Verses 11, 12. *Elias truly shall first come*] We are not to understand our Lord as intimating that there was

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

yet to be "a coming of Elias;" but simply as admitting the correctness of the scribes' declaration that "Elias" was to precede the manifestation of the Messiah. *And restore all things*] Mr. Watson says that the word rendered "restore" means, also, to *complete*, and that such is its import here: "Elias truly shall first come, and complete all things,"—that is, all things predicted of him by the prophets. *But—Elias is come, and they knew him not*] That is, they knew him not as the predicted Elias—did not *acknowledge* or *recognise* him as the herald of the Messiah. *Listed*] "List" is an old English word meaning *choice*, *desire*, and refers to John's death by Herod. Then understood they that he spake of John the Baptist, who came "in the spirit and power of Elias." Luke i. 17.

The Jews do still, we are informed, "expect the bodily appearance of Elijah himself; and, believing that his coming must precede that of the Messiah, their prayers for his manifestation have for ages been most constant, and have formed, indeed, a prominent subject of the public petitions in their synagogues. They believe that although he retains a body, it is not like our bodies, all its moisture having been dried up by that whirlwind and flaming fire in which he disappeared; and that in consequence of this change he received a sort of semi-spiritual being, subsisting without the necessities of human life. They further believe that he is present in many different places in the world at the same time, interesting

LESSON XXVIII.

A deaf and dumb spirit cast out—Christ again foretels his death and resurrection—He works a miracle to pay the half shekel for the temple service.—MATT. xvii. 14-27; MARK ix. 14-32; LUKE ix. 37-46.

MARK ix. 14-32.

AND when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

himself greatly in the affairs of the Jews, and constantly employed in doing good to Israel. It is in particular believed that he is present at all circumcisions, for which reason an empty chair is always set on the right hand of the person who holds the child, on which, though invisible, he is supposed to sit. Most of these views, if not all of them, were certainly entertained in the time of our Saviour. The Jews seek not, therefore, for the *presence* of Elijah, for they believe him to be already present, but for the *manifestation* of that presence.—*Pict. Bible; Allen's Modern Judaism.*

The glorious scene of transfiguration took place in connection with prayer. God is peculiarly near to us when we are sincerely engaged in that exercise; shedding abroad his love in our souls, imparting glorious views of his own character and of heaven, strengthening us for the endurance of trials, and preparing us for unexpected events, whether of joy or sorrow.—*Ripley.*

NOTES ON MARK ix. 14-32.

Verses 14, 15. *When he came to his disciples*] That is, to the nine other disciples—those whom he had not taken with him to the scene of the transfiguration. His

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him*, saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

return was on the day following that on which he had left them. Jesus, on his return, found *a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them*, perplexing them with objections and difficult inquiries, and especially exulting over them that they had not been able to cast out a devil from a youth who had been brought to them during the absence of Christ. *The people, when they beheld him, were amazed*] At what? His speedy return? We think not; for though we have several notices of his having retired for devotion, we know not that he ever (the temptation excepted) spent more than one night at a time in such exercises. We suppose they were "amazed" at the remains of the glory which even yet beamed from his countenance, and which made his face to shine, as Moses's did of old. Exodus xxxiv. 29, 30. The original denotes the highest degree of astonishment, mingled with fear or awe.

Verses 17, 18. *Master, I have brought unto thee my son*] The anguish of this afflicted father seems to have been extreme, and is depicted by the evangelists with deep pathos. Luke represents him as crying out, "*I beseech thee look upon him, for he is mine only child;*" and Matthew says, the father "kneeled" before Jesus, and entreated him to have *mercy*. The original implies that the father not only *knelt*, but that he *clasped the knees of our Lord*, a mode of supplication peculiarly

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth

earnest. Mr. Horne says: "Among the ancients the knees were consecrated to mercy; hence those who entreated favour fell at and caught hold of the knees of the person whose kindness they supplicated. So Homer:—

'Now, therefore, of these things reminding Jove,
Embrace his knees.'

To which the following answer is made:

'Then will I to Jove's brazen-floored abode,
That I may *clasp his knees*; and much misdeem
Of my endeavour, or my prayer shall speed.'

Cowper's Translation.

The following instance is from Virgil:

'Then *kneeled* the wretch, and *suppliant clung*
around
My knees, with tears, and grovelled on the ground.'

Pitt's Translation."

My son hath a dumb spirit] That is, his body is in the power of a spirit who makes him dumb; not so "dumb" that he could not make *any sound*, for Luke says, when the "spirit taketh him, he crieth out," but his articulation was prevented, and perhaps all command of himself destroyed, for the time being. *And wheresoever* (or, whenever) *he taketh him, he teareth him*] Bloomfield supposes "teareth" to mean, *dashes him on the ground*, "of which signification many examples from the classical writers and the Septuagint are adduced by the commentators." *And he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth*] Grinds his teeth, being convulsed. Matthew represents the father as stating the boy to be *lunatic*; that

away ; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless genera-

is, labouring under a disease the name of which is taken from the moon, (*luna*.) The disease was so called because it was formerly believed to be affected by the increase or decrease of the moon. "This disorder is supposed to have been *epilepsy*, [or falling sickness,] under the paroxysms of which the afflicted are deprived of all sense, bodily and mental, and nearly all articulation." The primary cause of the malady was, however, demoniacal possession. Under these aggravated sufferings the child *pined*, or wasted away. *I spake to thy disciples to cast him out*] Luke's record is, "I besought thy disciples," &c. : Matthew writes, "I brought him to," &c. ; which variety of expression, though all agreeing in substance, shows that the sacred writers were at liberty to use their own language in declaring any event, their inspiration extending no farther than to save them from error in *fact*. *And they could not*] It does not clearly appear whether the disciples had endeavoured to cast out this demon, and failed, or whether they were afraid to make the attempt ; though, from the question they afterward put to Christ, (verse 28,) we incline to the opinion that they had tried without succeeding. The reason of their failure is assigned by Christ (Matt. xvii. 20) to have been want of faith : and their unbelief seems to have been owing to their neglect of fasting and prayer. Mark ix. 29.

Verse 19. *O faithless generation*] Matthew says, "faithless and perverse generation." So also Luke. "Generation" means, here, *race of men*. It does not clearly appear to whom these words were designed to

tion, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

apply. If to the disciples, they must be understood in a somewhat modified sense, for they were not strictly "faithless"—that is, *without faith*,—neither were they now positively "perverse," which "signifies literally, *crooked*, or *twisted*, and metaphorically, *bad*, either in body, or in mind or morals." We presume the words to have been directed particularly against the scribes, who had probably been exulting over the inability of the nine apostles to cast out the demon. *How long shall I suffer you?*] That is, *bear with you*: a reproof much more applicable to the scribes than either to the disciples or to the father of the child. Jesus then directed that the child should be brought to him.

Verse 20. *When he saw him*] We presume this to mean, when the demon saw Jesus, or rather, when he perceived that Jesus was about to cast him out. *The spirit tare, &c.*] He was probably permitted at this time to exercise his utmost virulence, that the deeper impression might be made on the minds of the spectators. On witnessing the extreme sufferings of the lad, Jesus inquired of the father how long he had thus suffered, and was told, "From a child;"—not, perhaps, from infancy, but from early boyhood; and that the spirit frequently attempted to destroy him. *But, said the afflicted parent, if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us*] The

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

failure of the apostles seems to have had an injurious effect on the man's mind, whence he expresses himself doubtfully—*If thou canst, &c.*

Verse 23. *If thou canst believe*] This is in reply to the man's request, and is equivalent to a promise on the part of Christ to grant the desired favour, if *he*, the man, could entertain confidence in Christ's ability: not, indeed, that the man's faith was *necessary* to enable Jesus to eject this demon, but because there was a fitness, an evident propriety in his believing that the individual of whom he asked so great a boon was both able and willing to bestow it, and so far faith was necessary. *All things are possible to him that believeth*] That is, "all things" relating to cures of this kind, or whatever else may be needful, "are possible," are in my power, to be done "for him that believeth." In this way, and in this way only, are all things possible to believers. Jesus here demanded faith or confidence in himself—in his power of healing. So he demands faith of every sinner that comes to him; and no one can obtain the blessing of pardon unless he *believes*.

Verse 24. *Straightway the father said, with tears*] The powerful struggle between faith and unbelief in the mind of this poor man is artlessly but most affectingly portrayed.—*Watson.* *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*] "Lord," here, merely signifies master, or *sir*, as it often does in the New Testament. "Unbelief," in this place, means an *imperfect faith*, not a total want

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, *He is dead.*

of it. His prayer, therefore, was, that Christ would supply the deficiencies of his faith.

Verse 25. *Jesus rebuked the foul spirit*] He probably reproved the devil for afflicting the lad, and, with an authority which that *foul spirit* dared not resist, commanded him *to come out, and* (perhaps for the greater comfort of the afflicted parent) *to enter no more into him.* It is evident from Christ's address that this affliction was not an ordinary and natural *disease*, but the result of demoniacal agency. Before the demon came out, he convulsed the poor youth by such fearful agonies, as completely to exhaust his strength, and leave him as dead. How fearfully malignant do these inveterate foes of God and man appear, where they have opportunity to exercise their power; and what a blessing it is, that we are so generally preserved from their malice! Surely our expressions of fervent gratitude should ascend to heaven for this as well as for other mercies.

Verses 28, 29. *Why could not we cast him out?*] This question was put to Jesus by the nine after he had retired from the multitude to some house in the neighbourhood. Matthew (xvii. 20) makes Jesus ascribe their failure to their *unbelief*, and that unbelief was owing, as appears from verse 21, and from Mark ix. 29, to their neglect of *fasting* and *prayer*; whence we infer that these exercises, properly discharged, exert an influence on a man's faith; imparting to him increased or dimin-

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up ; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out ?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

ished reliance on and prevalence with God, as he is more or less diligent in their observance. By the expression, "this kind," &c., we do not understand our Lord as intimating that different kinds of demons inflict different species of diseases, and that therefore some are more easy to expel than others ; but, that when a possession by any demon took place, which, as in this instance, presented very fearful signs of rage, and power of torment, an ordinary faith might give way, under an impression of the difficulty of the case. The faith spoken of is what is termed "faith of miracles," and supposes an implicit reliance on Christ's power and willingness to perform the thing desired. The Saviour, according to Matthew, gave the following illustration of his doctrine : *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed*] Which, as before said, (note on Matt. xiii. 31, 32, page 172,) is the smallest of all seeds growing to a tree, and therefore used proverbially to express a small quantity of any thing. *And shall say to this mountain, Remove, &c.*] This, also, is a proverbial expression, and simply means any seemingly impossible thing. The nine had regarded the ejection of the demon as beyond their power ; but they are informed that if they had had faith, even though it were but as a grain of mustard-seed, the mountainous difficulty would have vanished. We do not suppose that the declaration of Christ is intended to apply in every case, without limitation ; but honestly

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

confess that we know not where the limit should be placed, nor in what particular the prayer of faith shall not prevail. Although faith may be as "a grain of mustard-seed," yet it admits of no doubt; it is *entire*, *implicit trust*, as far as it goes. *Nothing shall be impossible to you*] Nothing necessary to give efficiency to the doctrines they were commissioned to teach, or to illustrate the mercy and love of their religion: it was in order to this result that they were endued with the power to work miracles.

Verses 30-32. *They departed thence*] That is, as we presume, from the neighbourhood of Cesarea Philippi. *And passed through Galilee*] On their way to Capernaum, verse 33. Mr. Wesley suggests, that as Jesus "would not that any man should know" of this journey, he chose the most retired roads, that he might, without interruption from others, instruct the twelve more fully concerning his sufferings. *The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, &c.*] That is, it is as certain that he will be, as though it were already done. This declaration Christ prefaced, according to Luke, by remarking, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears," thus signifying their great importance. Our version of Matthew (xvii. 22) reads, "betrayed;" the word should have been rendered "delivered up." To be "delivered into the hands of men" implies to be *placed at their disposal*,

MATTHEW xvii. 24-27.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?

to be dealt with as they think proper. The men referred to are the Jewish rulers. *They understood not that saying*] They could not reconcile it with their preconceived notions of the Messiah's character. (See note on Matt. xvii. 9, page 355.) Luke (ix. 45) says, its meaning "was hid from them;"—that is, by their prejudices. Notwithstanding their ignorance of it, however, they feared to ask for an explanation. Matthew says, "they were exceeding sorry."

MATTHEW xvii. 24-27.

Verse 24. On the arrival at Capernaum of Jesus and his disciples, *They that received tribute-money*] The messengers of the temple at Jerusalem, sent out to collect its revenue, not the publicans or tax-gatherers. *Came to Peter*] In whose house Jesus is supposed to have resided when at Capernaum. *Doth not your Master pay tribute?*] The word "tribute" means a *tax*, and usually a compulsory one, such as was exacted from conquered nations. The original is *didrachma*, or two drachmæ, a coin equivalent to the Jewish half shekel, and valued at about thirty cents of our money. This tribute is generally supposed to be the sum paid annually by every male Jew twenty years old and over, for the service of the temple, and to have been collected during the month Adar; and we are informed that if payment was not made by the twenty-fifth of that month, a pledge was taken from the delinquent person. We know not whether its payment was obligatory or not, but it seems to

have been *expected* of all, and was probably very generally paid, not only by Jews residing in Palestine, but also by those dwelling in other countries, who remitted their contributions to Jerusalem yearly; which accounts for the immense treasures flowing into the temple. (*Josephus*, book xiv., chap. 7, sect. 2.)

The Scripture does not enjoin "that this tax should be paid annually; but, being devoted to the service of the 'tabernacle of the congregation,' by which the Jewish doctors understand the daily sacrifice and offerings, salt for the sacrifices, wood for the altar of burnt-offering, incense, show-bread, &c., which were constant national charges, they infer that the tax to support them must be national and stated. Grotius is of opinion that this tax, in the former ages of the Hebrew nation, was not annual, but only levied on peculiar exigencies; as when, in the reign of Joash, the temple was repaired, and 'proclamation was made through Judah and Jerusalem to bring in the collection that Moses laid upon Israel in the wilderness.' 2 Chron. xxiv. 9. Now one can hardly suppose that this tax would have been levied by proclamation if it had been a regular and stated tax. In Nehemiah's time it was also levied by a new ordinance, (Neh. x. 32, 33,) for which there would have been no occasion, if the law of Moses had made it perpetual. It finally became a yearly tax, being probably made so by the Asmonean princes, who, being high-priests, as well as possessed of the sovereign civil authority, would be very likely to increase, in this manner, the ecclesiastical revenues."—*Jenning's Jewish Antiq.* It was required that this tax, if collected in heathen coin, should be exchanged for Jewish money before paid into the temple—probably, on account of the idolatrous

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

symbols which the heathen coin so generally bore. Hence the vocation of the money changers, who were accustomed, on and after the fifteenth day of the month Adar, to seat themselves in the [court of the] temple, in order to exchange, for those who desired it, Greek



Grecian Didrachma, supposed to be one of Nerva's.

and Roman coins for Jewish half-shekels.—*Pict. Bible* and *Jahn*. Josephus says that after the destruction of the temple, Vespasian commanded every Jew to pay this annual tribute to the capitol at Rome.

Verse 25. *He saith, Yes*] Peter probably knew that Jesus had paid the tax before. *When he was come into the house*] Some commentators think that it was Jesus who now entered the house; but we think it was Peter, who had probably been prevented entering with Jesus by the collectors' inquiring respecting the tribute. *Jesus prevented him*] That is, *anticipated* him—spake before him, thus displaying his intimate knowledge of what had passed. "Prevent" properly means, *going before*,

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

or *preceding*, not hindering or obstructing, as we now generally use it. *Of whom do kings of the earth, &c.*] That is, earthly kings. *Their own children*] Their sons, members of their family. *Or of strangers?*] "Strangers" does not mean foreigners, but such of their subjects as were not of their own immediate family.

Verses 26, 27. *Then are the children free*] That is, they are free or exempt from the payment of taxes. Our Lord's argument is, As earthly kings do not receive tribute from their children, and this tax is collected by the authority of my Father, for the support of his household, then am I, his Son, excused, by their custom, from paying any to God. The whole reasoning turns upon his being truly and properly the Son of God, standing in the same relation to him as the children of earthly kings do to them; which amounts to an assumption of divinity. *Lest we should offend them*] Christ was ever careful to avoid giving needless offence; hence he waives his claim to exemption, lest the Jews should misconstrue his motives, and suppose that he undervalued the temple and its service, which would be placing a stumbling block in the way of their acknowledging him as the Messiah. This should teach us to "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake." *Go thou to the sea*] The Sea of Galilee, on whose western bank Capernaum is supposed to have stood. *Take the fish that first cometh up*] That which rises to, or meets the hook;

LESSON XXIX.

Christ teaches the disciples to be humble-minded—Danger of offences—Christ shows his love to and care for his followers.—MATT. xviii. 1-14; MARK ix. 33-50; LUKE ix. 47-50.

MARK ix. 33-50.

AND he came to Capernaum: and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves who *should be* the greatest.

as we should say, that which *bites*. *When thou hast opened his mouth*] Or *stomach*. *Thou shalt find a piece of money, &c.*] The Greek text is, "Thou shalt find a *stater*," a piece of money equal in value to the Jewish shekel, (about sixty cents of our currency,) and therefore sufficient to pay the tribute assessed on both Jesus and Peter. We know not whether the coin were created on purpose, or had been dropped by some one into the sea and swallowed by the fish, instances of which have occurred; but in either case the divinity of Christ is manifest,—as the one would require omnipotence and the other omniscience. Truly he was "very God!"

NOTES ON MARK ix. 33-50.

Verses 33, 34. *Jesus being in the house*] That is, the house in Capernaum; probably Peter's. *He asked them*] The apostles. *What was it ye disputed by the way?*] On the road from the mount of transfiguration to Capernaum. "Dispute" does not mean here a quarrel, but friendly, though earnest debate. Luke (ix. 46) says, "There arose a *reasoning* among them," &c. *They held their peace*] Being ashamed to make known tho

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

nature of their conversation, lest they should be reproved. *For they had disputed who should be the greatest*] Namely, as we learn from Matt. xviii. 1, "in the kingdom of heaven," by which is meant the earthly kingdom they still supposed the Messiah would establish. Bloomfield remarks that the disciples were not desirous of knowing "who should be the *greatest*, (that is, the *one greatest*;) but who should be the *greater*, and fill the *more considerable* posts in the court of the Messiah."

Verse 35. *If any man desire to be first*] Or great. *The same shall be last, &c.*] Rather, *The same should be, or, let him be, last of all.* Let him entertain lowly thoughts of himself. According to Christ's religion, humility and devotion to his cause contain the elements of true greatness. By this declaration Christ showed them that he was acquainted with the nature of their conversation: indeed, Luke (ix. 40) says that Jesus, "perceiving the thought of their heart," &c.; thus again displaying his omniscience, for none but God can search the heart. Jer. xvii. 10. Perceiving that their Master was knowing to the matter of their reasoning, the disciples requested him to settle the dispute and inform them who should fill the more prominent stations in his kingdom, which reconciles the accounts of the three evangelists.

Verses 36, 37. *He took a child*] Matthew says, "a *little* child:" he was, however, large enough to walk, for Jesus "called him unto him." *And set him in the*

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

midst] That all might see. Instruction by emblems and symbolical acts was always prevalent in the East. This "little child" is reported to have been the great Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, whom the Roman emperor Trajan condemned to be cast to wild beasts, for his attachment to Christianity, A. D. 107. We doubt whether the tradition can be relied on.

Having thus done, Jesus, according to Matt. xviii. 3, said, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*] To be *converted* is to be *turned, changed*; that is, from one opinion or line of conduct to another. The disciples needed to be "converted" from their ambitious projects, and mistaken views of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom. The word is also sometimes used to denote that great moral change elsewhere called regeneration, or the new-birth, in which sense to be "converted" is to have the will and affections turned to God, so as to seek him; to have the dispositions of the heart changed, so as to love him. They were to become as "little children" in humility, docility, and absence of worldly-mindedness, which are the usual characteristics of childhood, and opposed to the feelings they had just evinced. That it was chiefly the lack of humility which our Lord censures is plain from Matt. xviii. 4. *Whosoever shall receive one of such children*] That is, one like to this child; whosoever shall receive such a one, however lowly and unpretending, as his instructor, *receiveth me*; or, whosoever shall show regard to one of these humble and childlike disciples of mine, "in my name,"—as my

38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us, is on our part.

disciple,—shows the same regard to me. *And—receiveth not me*] That is, not me only, but also, *him that sent me*. Luke adds, “He that is least among you all, the same shall be great;” as though he had said, He shall be the most eminent disciple, who is the most humble.

Verse 38. *John answered*] Breaking in on the conversation to narrate a circumstance which just recurred to his mind. *We saw one casting out devils in thy name*] Commentators are much divided in opinion as to what this man was; some supposing him to be a believer in Christ, though not accompanying him in his journeys; others accounting him a disciple of John the Baptist; and still others ranking him among the Jewish exorcists. “In the name of Christ” usually means, by his authority; and it is not improbable that the power of working miracles was given to some believers who did not devote their entire time to following Jesus. In Acts xix. 13 we have an account of an unauthorized attempt to cast out a demon; but it was ineffectual, and resulted in much danger to the exorcists.

Verses 39, 40. *Forbid him not*] It is probable that John, like many since, thought that authority to cast out demons must come in one uniform manner, and supposing that this man had not received this power in that way, he forbade him. *He that is not against us is on our part*] Jesus had before said, (Matt. xii. 30,) “He

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42 And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

that is not with me is against me ;" the converse is now asserted, both maxims maintaining the important principle, that there is no neutrality in religion, and that those who were indifferent to him now, would finally be treated as enemies. This example should teach us not to be bitter in our denominational prejudices, but heartily to bid "God speed" to all whose systems embrace the essence of Christianity, though they may not "follow us" in every particular. There is a case somewhat similar to the above, narrated in Num. xi. 26-29, which see.

Verse 41. *Whosoever shall give, &c.*] See note on Matt. x. 42, page 255.

Verse 42. *Offend one of these little ones*] By "little ones," we understand our Lord to intend *any* of his disciples. To "offend," in the Scriptural sense, is to place an obstruction in the path of any one, so as to cause him to stumble in the way of duty ; or, in a still stronger sense, to turn him aside from the faith. *Better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, &c.*] Holden says, "In the original it is 'a millstone turned by an ass,' too large to be turned by the hand." So also Clarke. Others merely take it to mean the *upper millstone*. *And he cast into the sea*] The meaning is, it would be better to die than commit such a sin. Death by drowning does not appear to have had a place among Jewish capital punishments, but it was of fre-

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two

quent occurrence in the neighbouring nations, particularly among the Syrians. It was also known to the Greeks and Romans. Among the Hindoos, too, it was formerly a frequent punishment; and as the millstones in the East are not more than twenty inches in diameter, and three inches thick, there would not be the difficulty which some have supposed in thus despatching criminals. It is still common, among the oppressed of that country, to say, "I had rather have a millstone tied about my neck, and be thrown into the sea, than thus suffer."—*Roberts.*

This punishment afforded a striking metaphor of final and utter destruction, and seems to have become proverbial among the Jews in this sense. As there was no likelihood of a man's escaping drowning who should be plunged into a deep sea with a large stone fastened to his neck, so the case of continued malignant opposers, to whom the simile is applied, is wholly hopeless.

Jesus, having declared the awful condition of those who should "offend" any of his disciples, exclaimed, according to Matt. xviii. 7: *Wo to the world, &c.*] This is not the denouncement of a curse, but the expression of the deepest sympathy, "wo!" being equivalent to *alas!* *It must needs be that offences come*] It is evident from the next clause that these "offences" are not of absolute necessity; (for God cannot, consistently with the principles of justice, much less of mercy, punish a man for doing what he could not avoid;) but merely, that it must be expected, so long as men resist the influences of truth and righteousness, that "offences will come."

hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched :

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched :

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire :

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Verses 43, 45. For the exposition of these verses, see the notes on Matt. v. 29, 30, pages 31, 32.

Verses 44, 46. *Where their worm dieth not*] That is, the worm which preys on them. *And the fire is not quenched*] Meaning the fire which consumes them. This language is highly metaphorical, and coincides in imagery with Isaiah lxvi. 24, where the doom of the opponents of the Messiah is set forth under the figure presented by a battle field, with its heaps of slaughtered victims, the nauseous worm rioting amid the corruption, and a fire slowly consuming the unburied mass. Now suppose these mangled bodies to be inhabited by conscious souls, and instinct with life ; the gnawings of the worm, and the wastings of the fire to be unending, and you have a picture of the most fearful misery. The "worm" is commonly supposed to represent the remorse of a guilty conscience, and the "fire" the wrath of God. The whole is an emblem of the endless misery and suffering of hell.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his saltness,

Verse 49. *Every one*] Every one of the apostles, to whom this discourse was addressed, (verse 35,) and, through them, to Christ's true disciples in all after time. *Shall be salted with fire*] Salt is the well-known emblem, especially in the East, of sincerity and good faith; and seems to have had this typical use in the sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual. Num. xviii. 19; 2 Chron. xiii. 5. It is also one of the best preservatives from putrefaction with which we are acquainted. The "fire" with which they were to be "salted," is supposed by some to refer to those mysterious and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit with which the church of Christ was to be favoured, and which, in Luke iii. 16 and Acts ii. 30, are compared to fire. *And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt*] Allusion is here made to that precept of the law (Lev. ii. 13) which required that every sacrifice be seasoned with salt. "The sense seems to be, As every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt under the old covenant, so, in the new, every Christian shall have a portion of the Holy Spirit, which will enable him to mortify every corrupt appetite," &c.—*Macknight*. In Rom. xii. 1, men are exhorted to "present themselves a living sacrifice unto God;" a "sacrifice" is, therefore, *an offering made to God*. Compare Psa. cxvi. 17 with Gen. iv. 4.

Verse 50. *Salt is good*] Both emblematically, as representing sincerity or integrity, and positively, on account of its preserving qualities. *But if the salt have lost his saltness*] In which its usefulness chiefly consisted. *Wherewith will ye season it?*] Equivalent to pro-

wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

MATT. xviii. 10-14.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

nouncing it worthless. For further remarks on this passage, see the notes on Matt. v. 13, page 18. *Have salt in yourselves*] "Salt" seems to be here taken in a figurative sense for *grace*, or the *preserving* and *purifying* influences of the Holy Ghost, whereby they might be kept from pride, ambition, contention, &c.; and the result would be, *they should have peace one with another*.

MATT. xviii. 10-14.

Verse 10. *Despise not one of these little ones*] To "despise" is to *undervalue* or *think too lightly* of any person or thing. By "little ones" our Lord still means his childlike, humble followers. *For in heaven*] That is, in the world of future glory. *Their angels do always behold, &c.*] The Jews are said to have entertained the opinion that every person had a guardian angel assigned to him, whose province it was to watch over and protect him, and the Saviour is thought by many to countenance the doctrine. On this we remark, 1st. That angels are often employed by God on messages of love and mercy to mankind is very clear; but that every person is placed under the special guardianship of some particular angel cannot be proved; 2d. If it were proved that these "little ones" had their angelic attendants in common with others, it would not be any mark of *special favour*,

which the words of Christ seem to imply; 3d. The text conveys no intimation of any ministration of angels, special or general, being had in view. The general import of the word "angels" is *messengers*, but Mr. Watson and some other eminent critics contend that it here means *disimbodied spirits*, or *souls*. So in Acts xii. 15, it is related that Peter, on being miraculously delivered from prison, went to the house of Mark's mother, and knocked at the gate for admission; and that when the inmates learned from the maiden who had attended to the summons that it was Peter who stood at the gate, they discredited her account, and said it was his angel—meaning thereby, his *spirit* or *ghost*, probably supposing that Peter had been killed in the prison. The phrase, "they *behold the face of God*," may be illustrated by the customs of earthly courts, especially those of the despotic governments of the East. "The eastern monarchs were distinguished for studiously keeping up the majesty of royalty; they were difficult of access,* very rarely showed themselves to their people, and lived in the depth of their vast palaces, surrounded with every possible luxury, and gratifying every desire as it arose. In these kingdoms it was accounted the summit of human grandeur and felicity to be admitted to that splendid circle which surrounded the person of the sovereign;' hence the expression, 'beholding the face of God,' is to be understood of the enjoyment of the highest possible happiness." The argument against despising Christ's disciples is placed

* Among the Persians it was death to enter the royal presence without being called for, Esther iv. 11; and the Jewish law prescribed that the high-priest only should enter the most holy place under the same penalty. Lev. xvi. 2; Heb. ix. 7.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

on this ground, that they are *so* the objects of God's regard, that he will raise them into his immediate presence, and crown them with immortal life: and this is as certain as though it were already done, whence it is said, they *do behold*.

Verses 11-14. *For the Son of man*] Meaning himself. *Is come to save that which was lost*] By the "lost" we understand the *world of mankind*, who, having wandered from God, were estranged from him in affection, lost to all happiness, and exposed to the greatest misery. But Christ had come into the world to save them by the sacrifice of himself. *If a man have a hundred sheep, and one be gone astray, &c.*] "In parables we are to regard chiefly the leading point to be illustrated, which is here the love of Christ to the lost, the subordinate parts being frequently introduced merely to fill up the picture or complete the narrative. If the ninety and nine sheep left be a significant part of this parable, it must be interpreted of the angel inhabitants of heaven, who were those whom the great Shepherd left safe in the fold when he came into our world to seek and save that which was lost." *If he find it, he rejoiceth more, &c.*] Not because it is of more value than the others, but on account of the danger in which it had been placed, and

LESSON XXX.

*Forgiveness of injuries—Parable of the two debtors—
Mission of the seventy disciples.—MATTHEW xviii.
15-35; LUKE x. 1-16.*

MATTHEW xviii. 15-35.

MOREOVER, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and

from which it is now rescued: just as it is natural for us to express unusual joy at the accomplishment of a desired but unexpected event. Its "not being God's will that these should perish" is equal to a strong affirmation that it is his will they should be glorified in his presence.

Our Lord had before remarked on the danger of despising his "little ones," from the fact that they were so highly regarded by God. He has herein assigned an additional reason, viz., his own love to them, which was so great that he had come into the world to save them, which is the strongest of all reasons why they should not be despised.

NOTES ON MATT. xviii. 15-35.

Verse 15. We presume the instructions here narrated have no connection with the subjects of the preceding lesson, but that they were given at another time, though to the same persons. *If thy brother trespass against thee*] "Trespass" literally means *sin*, and, in the sense here used, implies *injury*, either in word or deed. The word "brother" denotes a member of the same religious community with the aggrieved person, as is clear from verse 17: and they are termed brethren as claiming to

him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

be children of the same parent, and as being supposed to be united in affection, pursuing the same objects, and tending to the same destiny. We do not think, however, that the mode of procedure here recommended is confined, or of right ought to be limited to professors of religion: the same course would produce the same happy effects in families and society at large. *Go and tell him his fault*] This was also required under the Jewish law. Lev. xix. 17. The original is, "Go and *reprove* him;" that is, so as to convince him of his error: perhaps the sense is better conveyed by "expostulate," as Campbell renders it. This ought to be done *alone*—without any witnesses—that the offender may be under no temptation from pride to become obstinate; and with reference to *gaining our brother*, which necessarily supposes calmness and kindness in the manner of convincing him. *If he hear thee*] That is, so as to make acknowledgment in case of wrong. *Thou hast gained thy brother*] To "gain" is to *win*, to *acquire*, to *recover*; and may here mean, thou hast won the affections, or acquired the confidence of thy brother: or, thou hast won or recovered him back to a right state of mind, and to the path of duty. See 1 Peter iii. 1.

We are required to pursue this conduct to an erring brother, not only because Christ has enjoined it, but, "1st. That the offender may have an opportunity of explaining his conduct. In nine cases out of ten, where one supposes he has been injured, a little friendly conversation would set the matter right and prevent difficulty. 2d. That an opportunity may be afforded for acknowledging error, and making reparation." This, indeed, strict

16 But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto

justice would not exact, because the offender ought to make a *voluntary* confession of error; but Christian charity requires that every inducement and encouragement should be held out to an erring fellow-servant to retract a false statement and to make restitution in case of wrong. "3d. That we may admonish him of any injury he has done, or is likely to do, to the cause of religion. This offence should not be blazoned abroad; which can do no good, but may do much harm. Religion, as well as an injured brother, often suffers by spreading faults before the world."—*Barnes*.

Verse 16. *Take one or two more*] This is the *second* step in endeavouring to "gain" an erring brother. The object of taking these persons seems to be, 1st. That he might hear *them*; they should, therefore, be persons in whom he has confidence, and whose counsel he would be likely to respect. 2d. That they might be witnesses before the church (should he still persist in refusing to make due concession) of the charitable attempt made by him who had received the injury to bring the offender to a better mind. They were not, therefore, witnesses as to the fact of the injury.

Verse 17. *Tell it to the church*] Here is the *third* ecclesiastical procedure. The "church" means the *assembly* of which the offender is a member, and may refer either to the whole body, or to such of them as were appointed to attend to such things. Among the Jews it would be understood of the synagogue, in which there was a body of elders before whom matters of this

the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind

kind were brought. It was to be "told to the church," that *they* might admonish the offending party, and, if possible, save him from the consequences which would follow a farther perseverance in wrong. This is the first step in disciplining a brother. *But if he neglect to hear the church*] That is, to attend to their advice and remonstrance. *Let him be unto thee as a heathen and publican*] The Jews had no religious, and but little civil intercourse with heathens; and publicans or tax-gatherers they considered as but little better, and therefore, as we learn from the Talmud, expelled them from the synagogue; they might, however, be readmitted on discontinuing their obnoxious calling. By the injunction to regard the incorrigible offender as a "publican," therefore, is meant that he should be expelled from the communion of the church, and be treated as a heathen. They were not, however, to treat him with unkindness, much less entertain feelings of ill-will toward him; for such emotions are not allowed by Christ to be indulged toward any. Maimonides gives an account of the procedure of the Jews with unworthy members. "If any refuse to feed his children, they reprove him, shame him, and urge him," we presume privately. "If he still refuse, they make proclamation against him in the synagogue, saying, 'N. is a cruel man, and will not nourish his children: more cruel than even the unclean birds; for they feed their young ones.'"

Verse 18. *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, &c.*] See notes on Matt. xvi. 19, pages 337, 338, where the "binding and loosing" is shown to mean the power of

on earth, shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

declaring certain things to be lawful or unlawful. In addition to the views there given, we would remark, that the various matters of dispute which might arise among brethren would involve moral questions, which must be determined by some fixed rules ; which rules were the laws enacted by the apostles : and by these laws Christians of all future time were to form their private judgment of right or wrong. The verse is thus shown to be intimately connected with the preceding.

Verse 19. *If two of you shall agree, &c.*] Strictly, If you *harmonize*, the metaphor being taken from a number of musical instruments playing the same tune, and on the same key : it means a perfect accordance or agreement in opinion and desire. *As touching any thing they shall ask, &c.*] That is, any thing in relation to the offending brother, on whose case the words are predicated. *It shall be done of my Father, &c.*] The meaning of the verse seems to be, That whatsoever agreement the church came to in the matter, founded on a right construction of the laws which Christ, by his Spirit, had inspired the apostles to enact, should have the approbation of God. Perhaps, too, it imports that the divine guidance should be granted in such cases, if honestly, diligently, and unitedly sought after.

Verse 20. *For where two or three*] Meaning any small number. The later Jews have a proverb somewhat

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

similar; viz., wherever two are conversing on the law, there the shechinah is among them. *Are gathered in my name*] By being "gathered in Christ's name," we understand, 1st. By his authority, or according to his direction, which means the same thing; and, 2d. For his worship. The first definition would best apply to their assembling as an ecclesiastical court; the second one will best comport with the objects and character of ordinary Christian assemblages. *There am I in the midst*] There are here two striking assumptions of divinity; 1st. In the blending of the Father's authority, at the close of verse 19, with the reason assigned in verse 20, for Christ's presence—making the Father's act, and his own, equivalent to one and the same act. 2d. In the attribute of omnipresence, which is requisite to being present wherever two or three are assembled in Christ's name, no matter at however great distance from each other, or in how many various places, which attribute belongs to Deity alone. Although this "presence" is spoken primarily in reference to confirming the disciplinary acts in the case supposed, it is by no means to be confined thereto; for "where two or three" are met with one accord in Christ's name, and agree to ask what he has promised to bestow, their prayers shall be answered in a spiritual manifestation of his presence, and the communication of all needed grace. The words, therefore, are also an encouragement to social prayer.

Verses 21, 22. *Lord, how oft, &c.*] This question was suggested to Peter's mind by our Lord's direction, verse 15; and he, judging from the frequent attempts made

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times : but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto

to save the brother, that the injured party was to be ready to forgive, asks to what extent the required forbearance should be carried. To forgive an offence is to *overlook* it, to feel and act as though the offence had not been given. *Until seven times?*] The later Jews had a maxim that an individual should, on evidence of repentance, thrice forgive acts of injury, but not oftener. Whether this maxim prevailed in our Lord's time, we know not ; if it did, Peter carries his charity beyond the prejudices of his age. It is probable, however, that as seven was what is termed a full or complete number, Peter used it to express the idea of *frequency*—shall I often forgive? Proverbs xxiv. 16. *Jesus saith, Until seventy times seven*] A high and certain, being put for an unlimited and uncertain number. The meaning is, that we are not to *limit our forgiveness*, but as often as an offending brother, as stated by Luke, shall “turn to us, saying, I repent,” so often are we to forgive. It is, evidently, the duty of the offender to *ask* forgiveness ; yet, as before stated, we ought to hold out every encouragement for him to take this step. Comp. Luke xvii. 3 with Matt. xviii. 17. Great prominence is given to the duty of forgiveness of injuries in the discourses of our Lord, probably, 1st. As being one which would be frequently required to be exercised ; 2d. Because all angry, harsh, malignant passions are utterly inconsistent with the spirit of his religion. His coming into the world was the result of infinite mercy, and his own benevolence must be imitated by his followers.

Verse 23. *Therefore*] In this respect—that is in re-

a certain king which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

spect to forgiveness of injuries, because pardon of injuries is to be unlimitedly granted to the truly penitent. *Is the kingdom of heaven*] Meaning the conduct of God in the administration of the economy of the gospel; by a common figure representing the nation or kingdom as doing that which the executive of the kingdom usually performs; as we sometimes say, England ratified the treaty, meaning thereby the king of England, who alone has power to bind the nation in treaty. *Likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants*] The "king" here represents the injured party of whom we have heretofore spoken, and his "servants" the offenders. To "take account" means to *inspect* and *settle the accounts* of these servants. The "servants" are probably collectors of the revenue, or governors of provinces, who would have to pay a certain annual sum for their office, as is customary in the East.

Verses 24, 25. *Ten thousand talents*] "That is, of silver; for in all numbers occurring in ancient authors, gold is never to be supposed unless mentioned. The 'ten thousand' [as in the case of the seventy times seven] denotes a very great, but no particular number of talents."—*Bloomfield*. The meaning is, He was *immensely* indebted. *As he had not to pay*] That is, had not wherewith to pay—was unable to make payment. *His lord commanded him to be sold, &c.*] Although the word rendered "servant," in this passage,

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

frequently means *slave*, it is evident it should not be so rendered here; for if he had been a slave he was already the property of his sovereign, and it would, therefore, have been of no pecuniary benefit to the king to sell him. It was customary among heathen nations, from very early antiquity, to sell poor debtors in order to the payment of their debts; among the Jews, however, we find no law to authorize such act. Their law, indeed, empowered a poor man to sell *himself*, if he saw fit; and the creditor might, probably, appropriate the personal service of his debtor for a limited time, as an equivalent for his debt; but nothing more. Exod. xxi. 2-6; Lev. xxv. 47. If in such case the poor man was married, and had children, his wife and children accompanied him. It also appears from Neh. iii. 5, and Isaiah l. 1, that parents might, and sometimes did, make over their children to their creditors in satisfaction of their debts; and the instance narrated 2 Kings iv. 1 leads us to suppose that the children of a deceased parent became responsible for his debts, and might, therefore, be taken by the creditor as bond-servants for a limited time, as the parent himself might have been, were he alive. Exod. xxii. 3 declares that a thief, who could not make restitution, should be sold; but that was certainly a case differing very widely from ordinary cases of debt. Now it is not improbable that the king regarded this servant as a public defaulter,—one guilty of stealing the public money,—and therefore dealt with him as the law directed a thief to be dealt with.

Verses 26, 27. *The servant worshipped him, &c.]* The margin says, *besought him*. "Worship" does not

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

here mean religious homage, but that outward sign of reverence which the inferior (especially in Eastern countries) commonly paid the superior, and which is termed *prostration*—he bowed himself to the earth. *The lord was moved with compassion, &c.*] And through that compassion forgave the debt. This strikingly represents the mercy of God to man.

Verse 28. *The same servant found a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence*] As before, a certain sum specifying an uncertain but very small one. Perhaps our Lord meant to teach, by this part of the illustration, that the offences which our fellow-men may commit against us are very small compared with our offences against God; and that since God has forgiven us *so much*, we ought to forgive the comparatively *small* offences which are committed against us. We do not suppose that this transaction is to be understood as taking place immediately, or indeed very soon after the forgiveness of the first-named servant; but at such distance of time as rendered the impression of his lord's mercy toward him less vivid, and had blunted,—through avarice, perhaps, or some other cause,—his own sense of gratitude. *He took him by the throat*] “In [ancient] writers it is frequently mentioned as the act of merciless creditors to grasp their debtors by the throat when drag-

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

ging them before the magistrate to take compulsory measures to obtain payment for their debt."—*Pictorial Bible*.

Verse 30. *Went and cast him into prison*] As imprisonment for debt is not recognised in the Mosaic law, it is not improbable that our Saviour accommodates himself to the customs of the Romans, of whose empire Judea at this time formed a part; or, it may be that the Romans had introduced their own law, in this particular, into Palestine.

The Jewish talent is rated at one thousand five hundred and eighteen dollars eighty-three cents; the *denarius*, or penny, at about fifteen cents: the whole indebtedness, then, of the first-named servant would be fifteen millions one hundred and eighty-eight thousand three hundred dollars; while that of the second would amount to but fifteen dollars. As before stated, however, the amounts fixed are merely illustrative, being designed to show the utter inability of men to make restitution to God for the offences committed against him, to set forth the divine clemency in pardoning such great offenders, and to teach us to bear with and forgive each the other his trespasses.

Verses 31-35. *His fellow-servants—told their lord*] This circumstance is merely thrown in to give finish to

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

LUKE x. 1-16.

1 After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into

the picture, and has no spiritual meaning attached *And his lord was wroth*] “Wroth” means *angry*. *And delivered him to the tormentors*] That is, the *jailers*, who probably acquired the name of “tormentors” from being frequently employed to torture and chastise such of their prisoners as were criminals. We do not know that tortures were ever inflicted, in prison, on mere debtors. *Till he should pay all that was due*] As the sum was so large that the man could never pay it, we must understand the imprisonment to be perpetual. Does not this case teach us, that pardon of sin, and consequent adoption into the family of God, may be forfeited by a course of subsequent misconduct in the individual so pardoned and adopted? The man had been fully and freely pardoned, but having afterward wilfully and grievously offended, his pardon was recalled, and he “delivered to the tormentors.” So shall it be with those who do not, “from their hearts, forgive every one his brother their trespasses.”

LUKE x. 1-16.

Verse 1. *The Lord appointed other seventy*] Rather, *seventy others*:—that is, seventy in addition to the twelve whom he had formerly appointed and sent out to preach. Mark vi. 7. The Scriptures do not state why these

every city, and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

numbers were chosen, but it is not unlikely that in selecting the number of twelve for the apostleship, reference was had to the number of tribes, and in the case of the seventy to the supreme court of the Jews, which consisted of seventy or seventy-two persons. Our Lord appears to have thus intimated that he was displacing the ancient church and forming a new one. *Sent them into every place whither he himself would come*] It seems that Jesus was now on his way to Jerusalem, to attend the feast of tabernacles, but, having sufficient time, he advanced by short stages, visiting, also, many places not directly on his route; and that he sent these disciples before him, two and two, to the different places at which he designed to tarry.

Verse 2. *The harvest truly is great, &c.*] See notes on Matt. ix. 37, 38, pages 229, 230.

Verse 3. *Lambs among wolves*] See notes on Matt. x. 16, page 240.

Verse 4. *Carry neither purse, scrip, shoes*] See notes on Matt. ix. 10, 11, pages 235, 236. *Salute no man by the way*] This direction evidently implies *haste*. For a similar case see 2 Kings iv. 29. We do not understand our Lord as prohibiting the courtesies of civil life, but simply that the disciples were not to indulge in useless,

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

unmeaning compliments, Eastern salutations being often formal, and consuming much time. "If two Arabs of equal rank meet each other, they extend to each other the right hand, and, having clasped, they elevate them as if to kiss them. Each one then draws back his hand and kisses it instead of his friend's, and then places it upon his forehead. The parties then continue the salutation by kissing each other's beard. They give thanks to God that they are once more permitted to see their friend—they pray to the Almighty in his behalf. Sometimes they repeat not less than ten times the ceremony of grasping hands and kissing."

Verse 5. See note on Matt. x. 12, page 237.

Verse 6. *If the son of peace be there*] In the Jewish style of speaking, a man who is distinguished for any good or bad quality is called the son of it: hence we have "sons of wisdom" for *wise men*; and here, "son of peace" for a man of an *amiable* and *peaceable* disposition. See farther on Matt. x. 13, pages 237, 238.

Verses 7, 8. *In the same house remain, &c.*] See the note on Matt. x. 11, pages 236, 237. *The labourer is worthy, &c.*] See note on Matt. x. 10, page 236.

Verse 9. *The kingdom of God is come nigh unto*

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you : notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

13 Wo unto thee, Chorazin ! wo unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

you] That is, is *nigh at hand*. See notes on Matthew x. 7, page 234, and Matt. xvi. 21, page 339.

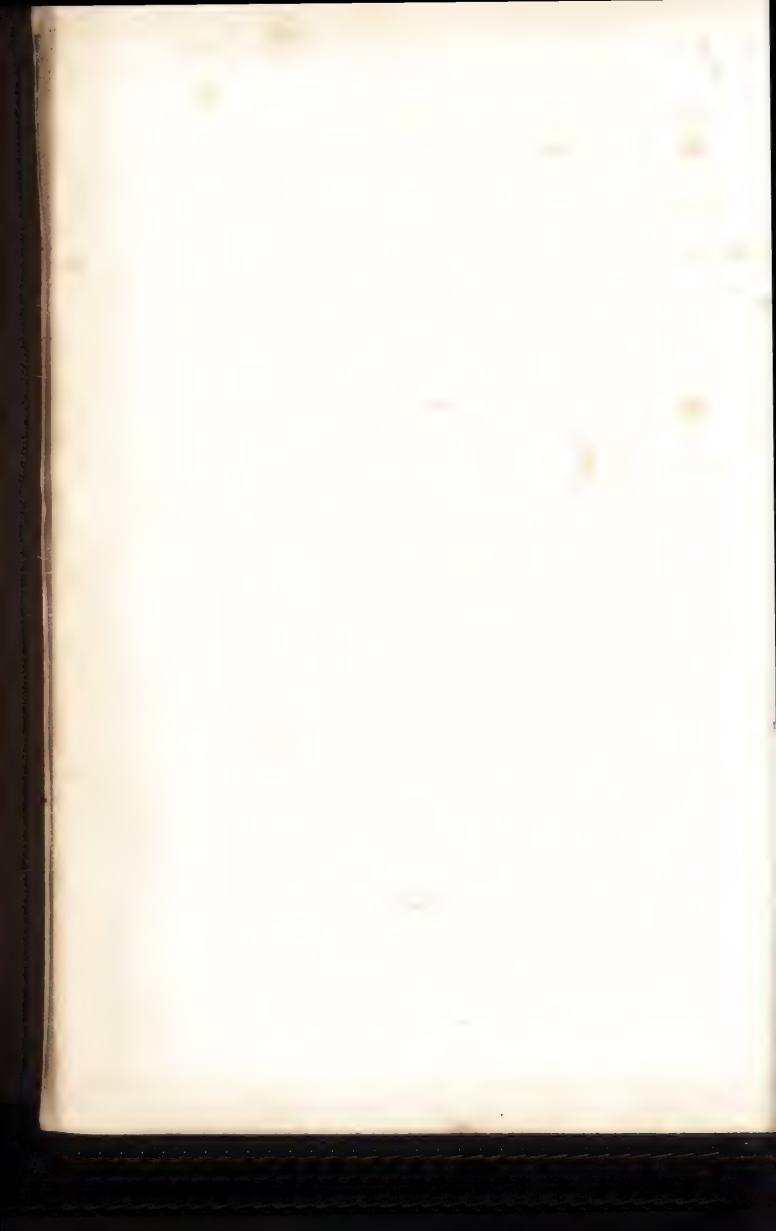
Verses 10-12. See notes on Matt. x. 14, 15, pages 238, 239.

Verses 13-15. See notes on Matt. xi. 20-24, pages 110-116.

Verses 16. See notes on Matt. x. 40, page 254.









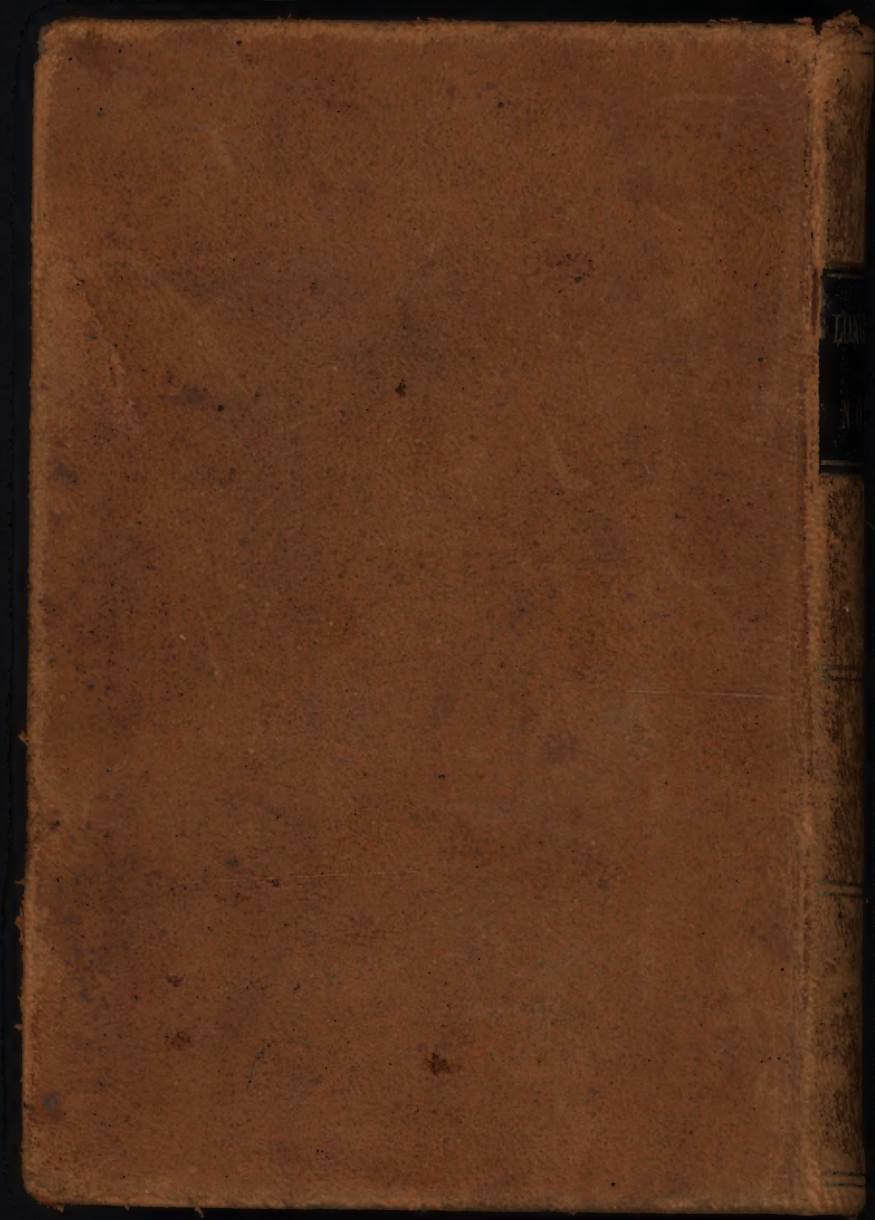
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